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HISTORICAL FALLACIES

REGARDING

COLONIAL NEW YORK,

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ONEIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

UTICA, N. Y.

AT ITS SECOND ANNUAL MEETING,

JANUARY 14, 1879.

BY

DOUGLAS CAMPBELL,

OF NEW YORK.

NEW YORK:

F. J. FICKER, LAW & JOB PRINTER, 79 & 81 William St.,

1879.

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Extract from minutes of annual meeting of The Oneida Historical Society, January 14th, 1879:

"At the conclusion of the address of Major Douglas Campbell, it was, upon motion of Mr. Ellis H. Roberts,

"Resolved, That the thanks of the Oneida Historical Society are most gratefully extended to the distinguished orator of the evening, for his scholarly and exhaustive, his suggestive and inspiring address, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

("S. N. DEXTER NORTH,

"Rec. Secretary.")

HISTORICAL FALLACIES

REGARDING

COLONIAL NEW YORK.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE, during his last illness, desiring a friend to read to him was asked to select the book. "Anything but History," he answered, "that must be false." The dying statesman, who for more than twenty years, as Prime Minister of England, had been making history, knew full well whereof he spoke. His criticism was somewhat novel then, but the century since its utterance has made the sneer a maxim. A hundred years ago, and to the common mind all history was alike ; the legends of Livy or the marvels of Herodotus, the gossip of Suetonius or the campaigns of Cæsar—all were sacred, to question them was well nigh heresy. But to-day is the age of the iconoclasts. Under their blows our idols are crumbling to powder. They dig up the musty records from which history has been made, they search into the lives of the historians to find out who they were, and they seek further to find out why they wrote. True science is exact, for it is founded on laws which are immutable ; true poetry is immortal, for its breath is inspiration : but history is like the work of the photographer, it depends for its accuracy upon the material, the workman, the focus and the atmosphere. No wonder that the scholar rises from his task to say with Walpole, "It must be false."

This restless, inquisitive nineteenth century presses its inquiries everywhere, into the heavens above, into the earth beneath, and into the waters under the earth ; but its record will contain no more instructive and fascinating chapter than that which describes its re-arrangement of the annals of the past. We have seen a host of great scholars, led by the audacious Niebuhr, reconstructing Roman history ; we have seen another army sifting the grains of truth from the fairy tales of the early Greek historians ; while to-day an indefatigable explorer exhumes the walls of ancient Troy, and shows to the world that the immortal Homer was no writer of romance.

But it is not ancient history alone that our scholars are re-writing. Men now living have seen the " Wizard of the North " change the whole face of Scotland by the magic of his matchless pen ; until Scott waved his wand, it was but the

" Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood ; "

but under his spells it has become, for old and young alike, the land of heroic daring and romantic deeds.

What Sir Walter did for Scotland, Prescott and Irving have done for Spain, Macauley has accomplished for the England of the Puritans, and, what is of more interest to us, Motley has done for the heroes who founded the great Dutch Republic, planted the Colony of New York, and laid the corner stone of the Empire State.

Did time permit I should like to dwell upon this subject, and point out some of the causes which formerly made history of so little value. I should speak of Louis the Fourteenth, who withdrew a pension from one historian for his impertinent remarks upon taxation, who banished Fenelon for a supposed criticism of his reign in the romance *Telemachus*, and threw another author into the Bastille for innocently revealing a secret of state in a panegyric of the Grand Monarch himself. I should like to point out the influences

of a different character, but hardly less potent, which fettered the historians in England. I should like to show how Voltaire first brought secular history to the bar of human reason by attacking the early fables of Greece and Rome, thus laying open the broad domain of the past to the fearless seekers after truth, and then contrast the work of his great successors, following his methods, with that of men like Rollin, who, in their libraries, blindly translated the classic authors or evolved history from their inner consciousness. Above all, I should like to show the effects of modern liberal ideas in opening to the scholar the secret archives of state which have made possible the works of recent historians, calling attention to the fact that less than forty years ago an agent of the State of New York was in England denied access to the official documents relating to our colonial period. The topic is a fascinating one, and so far as I know it has received but slight consideration, but I must confine myself to-night to a single branch of this broad subject.

In view of the multitudinous volumes which have been written upon America, it would seem at first glance almost presumptuous to suggest that anything of importance had been omitted. But when we consider the worthlessness of most of the old accepted histories of countries much better known and more cultivated than our own, we shall feel less surprise at the assertion that the truth about New York has never yet been written.

The reasons for this are not far to seek. Here all the obstacles which were encountered in the Old World existed in an exaggerated form, with a multitude of others unknown in Europe. First, was the newness of the country. The early settlers were too much occupied in conquering nature, and in battling for their rights, to find time to compose historic memoirs. Added to this, was the fact that the very cosmopolitan population, which helped so largely to make this colony great in action, prevented the oneness of feeling and pride of origin which ordinarily give birth to history. Again, New York had but a small population in colonial times. At

the outbreak of the French and Indian war, she stood seventh or eighth in rank; at the adoption of the Federal Constitution, in 1789, she had only advanced to the fifth position. Lastly, her original inhabitants were Dutchmen, of whom the English knew very little, and whom, with characteristic insolence, they hated and despised just in proportion to their ignorance.

These conditions threw the writing of colonial history into the hands of the New Englanders, and there were special reasons why that people never understood New York. From their first landing at Manhattan Island, the Dutchmen found themselves engaged in a boundary quarrel with their New England neighbors, which continued even after the Revolution, and at times almost culminated in open war. New York was generally in the right, and it was so adjudged by the authorities in England, but her victories only intensified the bitterness against her. This, with the English dislike for foreigners inherited by our eastern brethren, sufficiently accounts for the prejudice, of which we see so much among the New England revolutionary writers. But that is only a part of the story, a more potent cause of misunderstanding was actual want of materials relating to our history. We must remember that in the last century these colonies were very far apart. We are much nearer Central Europe to-day than we were to Virginia a hundred years ago. The early records of New York were in Dutch, a language which our own people had substantially forgotten, and lastly, our official correspondence was almost a sealed book not only to New Yorkers, but to all others who desired to investigate her history.

Such are some of the causes which have made colonial New York play so insignificant a part in the current histories of America, and the result of this is not a matter of slight importance. If I am right in my conclusions, the want of a correct appreciation of the history of New York is something more than a local loss, for it causes the absence of a chapter without which American history is, to say the

least, very incomplete. To illustrate my meaning, let me call your attention to a few facts, the truth of which will be at once acknowledged, but which have generally passed unnoticed.

According to the views of most historians, the two colonies which exercised the greatest influence upon American affairs were Massachusetts and Virginia, which stood head and shoulders above the rest in wealth and population. Now take down from your book shelves the volumes relating to America, and glancing them over, what do you discover? In regard to Virginia you will find chapter after chapter devoted to the days of her colonization, you will read that in 1631 her House of Burgesses passed a law that no tax should be levied without its consent, and that, in fact, the colony was almost independent. But run down the pages till the restoration of Charles the Second, in 1660, and thereafter you will find a blank. Virginia becomes the mildest and most easily managed of all the Provinces; you hear no more of independence; the great history of the primitive age has closed, to re-open only with the American Revolution.

Now, repeat the process with New England, and see how nearly you reach the same result. Begin with the landing of the May Flower in 1620; set down the famous names which have illuminated the pages of her colonial annals prior to the Stamp Act, and you will find nearly all of them clustered in the first fifty years of her existence. Leave out the Witch persecutions, and recall what you know of her history, and you will discover that it is substantially confined to the same great period. In 1683 the charter of Massachusetts was forfeited by Charles the Second; take up your colonial histories, and notice how little you will find relating to New England after that event. Prior to that time Massachusetts had almost been a separate republic, and her writers glow with justifiable enthusiasm as they trace the great events of those heroic days. But run down the subsequent years to the passage of the Stamp Act, and mark how bare the pages are of interest. Bancroft devotes two entire volumes to the

period anterior to the English Revolution of 1688, and then gives a part of two chapters to the interior affairs of the colonies from that time until 1748, when, he claims, that the American Revolution began.

Now, what is the cause of this? Before answering this question let me say a few words about the cause commonly assigned, and in which lurks one of those fallacies with which history is overflowing. In 1688 occurred the event which settled English liberty on an imperishable basis. At the time of the Stamp Act in 1765, the American colonists are found in possession of most of the rights which the English acquired by their glorious revolution. Many persons assume that America gained these rights at the same time and by the same event, and hence conclude that the intervening period was one in which the people, happy in their liberty, lived on unnoticed and uncared for, enjoying the blissful lot of being without a history. Of all historical fallacies none surpasses this. It has gained credence by a misapprehension of the nature of the English revolution and of the character of the man whom it placed upon the throne. Read the surface of books and you will think of William the Third as a liberal minded Dutchman, who, from some kind of disinterested love of English liberty, left his home and ascended the throne from which the despotic Stuarts had been driven. As you read further, some curious problems will arise before you. You will see that the only country that he ever loved was his native Holland, that he hated England and disliked her people. Recollecting that he was a grandson of Charles the First, and a nephew as well as son-in-law of James the Second, you will find that he was as arbitrary and fond of kingly power as his grandfather or uncle. Go on now and read between the lines, and you will see that this Dutch Stadtholder was a greater man than English historians have ever painted him, although the revelation of his true character is not so flattering to English pride. You will see a careworn, haggard man, prematurely old, almost friendless, racked with ceaseless pains, dragging out fourteen years of bitter exile

from motives much higher than ambition or love of England. From his early boyhood France had been his enemy, for she was the foe of European liberty. He had saved Holland from her grasp by the exercise of talents which history can scarcely equal, but something more remained. Nothing but his frail life stood between the Grand Monarch and universal power. The arch enemy must be crippled or nothing had been done. To accomplish this became his life work. Slowly but patiently he built up the Grand Alliance, yet England, whose aid was indispensable, could never be secured while the Stuarts on the throne were rioting with Gallic gold. He married his cousin to advance his plans but nothing came from that ; at length the revolution called him to the throne, and he went to England to gain an ally for the Grand Alliance.

To William personally, England's aid was dearly bought. Time and time again his kingly power was encroached upon; concession after concession was wrung from his necessities, until it seemed as if his pride could bear no more, and that he must give up his life work and return to Holland. Fortunately for the world, he persevered ; France was crippled; Europe was saved, and the concessions wrung from him by Parliament, crystallized into the foundations of English liberty. Such was the origin of the great constitutional principles which make the English revolution so justly famous. But America had no troops to furnish and no money to supply; she had nothing with which to purchase freedom. It is probably the most curious fact connected with the reign of William, that in all the discussions regarding popular rights which mark that period, the colonists were never so much as mentioned. They were left after that event just where they stood before, subject to the prerogative of the crown, and that crown was worn by a monarch, who was at least as fond of power as any of the Stuarts.

Such being the character of the English revolution and its relations to the Colonies, one sees that America must have had a history for the next half century. To those who re-

gard New England as America, this proposition will be somewhat novel. But, although New England during that period made little history, it was not because America was standing still. New England was not America, and no one will understand our institutions until he appreciates this truth. Look about you to day, sum up all that to your mind distinguishes our people, and then turn back to the famous history of the Puritans, and see how little you will find of similarity between the two. New England was a Puritan colony from Old England, its emigration was a transplanting, not the creation of a new people. Its great men simply acted out in Massachusetts and Connecticut a chapter of English history. Between 1620 and 1640, twenty one thousand Puritans left England and settled in America. They were men picked from among a race who, directly after their departure, made the English Commonwealth honored in every quarter of the globe. They had among their number statesmen and soldiers, and so many scholars that it was said one out of every two hundred and fifty emigrants was a college graduate. Here they showed the same virtues as their English brethren exhibited in the Long Parliament and on the fields of Dunbar and Worcester, but, with their faith, courage and indomitable energy, were mingled the same petty bigotry and narrowness of mind.

With the restoration of Charles the Second, Puritanism died in England. It lingered on a little longer in America, but with its decadence New England's first great chapter of history was closed. The foundation of Puritanism was strictly a religious one; civil liberty was of consequence only as a protection to religion; the State was important simply because the Church was the State. When that intense, religious, crusading spirit died out—and we see it failing long before the English revolution—but one result could follow. There came a period of transition which sinks into insignificance compared with the days of positive ideas by which it was preceded. The Puritan was becoming an American; the descendant was worthy of his ancestor, but he did not at once spring into full maturity.

Meantime, however, America was moving forward. The missing chapter is somewhere to be found. Let us see if we can find it.

The favorite process of the scholars who have reconstructed ancient history, is to test the statements of early writers by the argument of probabilities. Judged by this standard we should expect much more from New York than that with which she has been credited. At two points we have solid ground as a basis for our reasoning. In the first place, we know the ancestry of the founders of New York; their history has been written by outside, impartial scholars, who tell us that they were second to no people of modern times. That much is settled, and the present is no less assured. We see around us what is, indeed, the Empire State; first in wealth and population, second to none in enterprise, patriotism and public spirit. Within the present generation we have seen her sending to the battle-field half a million of her sons. Go back to the days which followed the Revolution, and we hear the same report. She launched the first successful steamboat, she dug the first great canal; she built the first locomotive in America. In love of liberty and devotion to the Union she has never been excelled. One of her sons penned the most famous of the early revolutionary papers which excited the admiration of Burke and Chatham. Her statesmen furnished the model for the constitution of the Union. She gave to Washington's Cabinet the great master of American finances; she gave to the Supreme Court its first Chief Justice. These things we know. If then, in the early colonial times which tried men's souls, New York was wanting, it would be strange indeed. Nations do not, like men, put off their bodies each seven years, nor do they undergo an instantaneous change of heart. Some men achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them, but nations are only born great.

But we have much more than the argument of probabilities to throw light upon the subject. The old records, buried long in dust and unknown to the earlier historians, have been

discovered within the past few years. To the New York Historical Society belongs the chief credit of their resurrection. More than thirty years ago it induced the Legislature to send an agent to Europe to explore the state offices of Holland, France and England. In Holland he found great masses of correspondence and documents relating to the Dutch period of the colony ; in France all the papers relating to Canada and our Indian wars ; and in England, all the official correspondence between the royal governors and the British cabinet. At home, the society rescued from the garrets and cellars of our public buildings most of the records of the colony itself. We have all the statutes, all the minutes of our colonial assemblies, and many of the records of our courts. These documents, now substantially complete, show that colonial New York was a daughter worthy of her noble ancestors and fit to be the mother of the Empire State. They prove conclusively that here is the unwritten chapter, without which the history of American liberty is incomplete.

Several causes combined to make New York the most important of all the colonies, although far down the scale in point of population. The chief of these was her geographical position, which gave her, through the Hudson and Mohawk, the key to the American continent. Upon this subject I need not dwell. The learned and eloquent President of this society* has on other occasions treated it so exhaustively that gleaners in the field find nothing to reward their industry.

The second marked feature of the colony was the character of her population. New England and Virginia were peopled almost exclusively by Englishmen, but New York was always cosmopolitan. The America of to-day is not English in its character, it has engrafted on the original stock shoots from all the modern European nations, and this heterogeneity makes it what it is, with all its virtues and short comings. Such as America is to-day, New York has ever been, except that her settlers were culled from nations whose virtues are all historic.

*Hon. Horatio Seymour.

First in time stand the Dutch—heroic men who came in an heroic age. We never can overrate their influence in the history of American liberty. Their New England neighbors sometimes sneered at the Dutchmen, but an American historian has taught the whole world to do them honor. While Henry Hudson was on his memorable voyage, the inhabitants of the United Netherlands took their place among the nations of the earth as an independent people. For forty long years they had carried on a war with Spain and had grown great in the struggle. At the outset they only demanded religious liberty as subjects. For answer their country was overrun by Alva and his Spanish butchers, the Council of Blood covered the land with gibbets, and the inquisition sacrificed its victims by thousands. Then they became a nation of warriors worthy of their Batavian ancestors whom Tacitus has immortalized. "Other nations," said he, "go to battle—they go to war." In the open field they defeated the trained legions of Philip; besieged in their cities they surrendered only to famine, and at times, to sweep the invader from their soil, they cut their dykes and gave the land back to the sea from which it had been rescued. In 1581, thirteen years after the outbreak, they proclaimed their independence of Philip, and thenceforth fought for civil as well as religious liberty. On the 9th of April, 1609, while the *Half Moon*, Hudson's vessel, was on the ocean, after forty years of continuous war, Philip the Third signed a twelve years' truce at Antwerp, by which he recognized the United Netherlands as "free countries, provinces and States."

It is to this people, restless and undaunted, successful by the land and by the sea, whose motto was "Taxation only by consent," who founded the first great republic, and who enforced the doctrine of universal religious toleration, that the Empire State of New York owes its origin.

Next in point of numbers and of time came another race, who however need no eulogy, for history has always done them justice. They were the men who chanted psalms as they went into the battle of Ivry with Henry of Navarre,

who for years had by their virtues kept France from sinking into unutterable depths of public and private vice. Then came accessions from New England of the more liberal thinkers, who fled from that new hierarchy to find a home where they could be free to worship God as they thought fit. Later on came Protestants, driven out of the Palatinate by the cruelties of Louis the Fourteenth, Scotch-Irish who had borne the horrors of the siege of Londonderry, Catholic Highlanders who had fought with the Pretender.

Thus the people were gathered from all nations, Dutch, French, English, German, Irish and Scotch, and yet they had one bond of union. They had all suffered for their religion, and all had a keen sense, not only of their religious but of their civil rights.

The third peculiarity of New York, was the fact that it was settled purely for purposes of commerce. New England had its origin in a religious movement. Virginia grew up on tobacco culture. New York alone was planted solely for commercial reasons. The character thus impressed upon the colony at birth was never lost. The New Yorkers have always been emphatically a commercial people. Sometimes their New England neighbors sneered at them as a race engrossed in the pursuit of gain, and even to-day, among a certain so-called "cultured," uneducated class, the sneer has not altogether lost its force.

It is a fact that New York did not think of establishing a classical university until a century after Massachusetts had founded Harvard College. Of course no one to-day would belittle New England's services in the cause of education. She gave to America the common school system which the Puritans found in Holland. There her pride is fortified impregnably. But her colleges, devoted mainly to making preachers of controversial theology, stand upon a different footing. Unless I am greatly mistaken, their influence upon the progress of American liberty has been greatly overestimated. Looking back at the world's history, we find that few ideas regarding civil liberty have emanated from classical

universities. They have sprung from a very different quarter.

The commerce of the Phœnicians gave birth to the alphabet, arithmetic and the system of weights and measures. Thus literature and science had their origin in commerce. During the middle ages the walled towns, the homes of commerce and manufacture, preserved the seeds of civil liberty. The great Dutch revolution of the 16th century was the work of the foremost merchants of the world. In regard to England, Macauley sums up the whole truth in saying: "The foundations of our constitution were laid by men who knew nothing of the Greeks but that they denied the orthodox procession and cheated the crusaders, and nothing of Rome but that the Pope lived there." During the contests with the Stuarts, while the universities were the strongholds of the Crown, Cromwell recruited his army from the manufacturing and commercial classes. Oxford has always been tory and conservative; London has been liberal and progressive. To this rule America is no exception. The merchants of colonial New York knew little of the classics, but they led their countrymen in the contest for civil liberty.

There was still another feature of New York's position which served in later days to make her a leader among the colonies; this was her governmental relation to the mother country. For over forty years she was the private property of the Dutch West India Company, a vast trading and privateering corporation, then for the next twenty years the private property of the Duke of York, and, finally, a possession of the Crown of England. Most of the other colonies, through grants and charters, gained privileges and concessions; New York never obtained the simplest right save as the spoils of victory. At first these conditions seemed unfavorable to progress. While New England and Virginia were under liberal charters rejoicing in substantial independence, New York was struggling for the incipient rights of freemen. But the absence of a charter proved in the end

only a blessing in disguise. From each contest, crowned as it was with victory, the people rose nerved to demand some new, withheld advantage.

But there was another result even more marked than this. In the chartered colonies the people had a contract with the crown. There disputed questions arose over the construction of a legal document. Here, when a right was claimed, no musty parchment could be produced in its support or derogation. Hence, from an early day this people, for their argument, fell back upon the law of nature, or their inherent rights as British subjects, a claim which in the nature of things could only culminate in revolution and independence. Trained in such a school it is not strange that the statesmen of New York played so important a part in the revolutionary struggle, and that within her borders arose the two great political parties which since that time have divided the people of the United States.

For the first forty years of her existence, New York was the property of the Dutch West India Company. Upon this period I do not design to dwell, but I may say in passing that he who will attentively read the pages of O'Callaghan and Brodhead will find his trouble well repaid. It has been the fashion to sneer at those early Dutchmen as stupid and phlegmatic, heavy with beer and narcotized by tobacco, and I regret to say that a native New Yorker first set the example by employing all his genius to throw ridicule over ancestors whom he should have venerated. On the pages of veritable history we see a race of sturdy, liberty-loving men, who, in defence of free speech and self-government, bore fines, prison fare and banishment, until at length they mastered a despotic Governor and the soulless corporation which ruled their fortunes.

As I pass over the days of the Dutch West India Company, so I must hasten by those of the Duke of York, who for more than twenty years held the province as his private property. In his time the colony gained the concession of a representative Assembly, but true to her destiny, this was not

granted as a voluntary gift. The people refused to be taxed without their own consent; the New York merchants arrested and tried for high treason the Mayor of the city for levying duties without an act of Parliament, and finally, James, seeing that otherwise the colony would be a heavy charge upon his private purse, consented that the people should have their own Assembly.

When this Assembly came together in 1683, a majority of its members were found to be men of Dutch descent. The fact is noteworthy, for their first act was one which should endear their memory to every native of the State.

Five years before the famous Bill of Rights in England, and eight years before the memorable act of Massachusetts, these Dutchmen passed a Bill of Rights, which history has ignored, although the statesmen of Massachusetts imitated its provisions. In bold, unmistakable language, it asserted that the "supreme legislative power should forever be and reside in the Governor, council and people, met in general assembly," and then went on to enumerate the other rights to which they were entitled; among these were trial by jury, freedom from taxation except by their own consent, exemption from martial law, and the quartering of soldiers upon citizens, and perfect toleration to all persons professing faith in Christ. Of this noble document, issued in 1683, it may be said that it is surpassed by nothing in American history; no, not by the declaration of Independence itself, for the boldness and force of language with which it declares the people of New York entitled to all the rights of freemen.

This act was transmitted to England; over it the Duke of York deliberated long, but finally gave it his approval. However, before it left his hands he mounted the throne as successor to his brother Charles, and New York became part of the possessions of the Crown. Following out in America the system which he attempted in England, James abolished the colonial Assembly, and attempted to rule by the royal prerogative. How he succeeded at home the world knows by

heart. The English revolution of 1688 drove the Stuarts into perpetual exile, and placed a native Dutchman on the throne of England.

We come now to the chapter of American history of which I have already spoken as yet unwritten. As I have said, the English revolution left the colonies in their relation to the Crown without substantial benefit. In England the King's authority was much curtailed, here the prerogative was undiminished. The great Lord Holt said of the colonies, "Their law is what the King pleases." Granville, the President of the Privy Council, said, "The Governor's instructions are the law of the land, for the King is the legislator for the colonies." William the Third allowed New York a representative Assembly, for government without it would have been impossible, but the instructions which he issued to his royal governors were copied almost word for word from those prepared by the bigoted, intolerant James the Second.

For several years after the English revolution, New York was convulsed by conflicts of race, and during that period but little permanent advance was made. However, the struggle for the mastery between the Dutch, the Huguenot and the English elements among the population, developed a love of self-government which found rapid growth when the people became united. Time, the great physician, healed the dissensions, and what he left undone was accomplished by the vices of the men who were sent out as royal governors.

The first great struggle arose under the rule of the disreputable Cornbury, the cousin of Queen Anne. The questions involved in this were two-fold—one religious, the other civil.

From early Dutch days the colony had practised full religious toleration. When Stuyvesant attempted to barry the Quakers, the West India company, in a justly famous letter, rebuked his zeal and ordered him to follow the example of his native land. The policy then adopted here had never

been abandoned, although Maryland, which had started upon the same course, had fallen by the wayside. Now Cornbury opened the last attack upon the right of conscience.

The Governor's instructions, which, according to the English jurists, had all the force of law, provided that no minister should preach in the province without his license. In 1707 the Rev. Francis Makemie, a Presbyterian clergyman, traveling through New York, was bold enough to preach without permission. Dragged before the Governor, he was asked how he dared to violate the royal instructions. He answered in ever-memorable words: "Your instructions are no law to me." Being indicted and tried for his offence, he was defended by the three foremost lawyers of the colony. It is a creditable fact that these men were all Episcopalians. They had assisted in every legitimate effort to build up the Church of England; but when liberty was attacked, even in the person of the dissenter, they volunteered in her support. Upon the trial the lawyers took the position first pointed out by their client. They insisted that it was no offence to violate the royal instructions, for they had no force as laws. The learned Chief Justice Mompesson, in charging the jury, told them that the question was a doubtful one, and the victory was gained, for the prisoner was acquitted.

This trial of Makemie is justly famous. It has been spoken and written of times without number. Every one knows of it as establishing freedom of religious worship in New York, but no historian seems to have recognized its still greater importance as dealing the first blow at the royal prerogative in the colonies.

The lesson set to America by Makemie's trial was quickly learned. Cornbury went to New Jersey to meet the Legislature, who were refractory, and, as he thought, insolent. To excuse some of his demands, he read to them extracts from his instructions. Through their mouth-piece, Lewis Morris, one of New York's great men, they responded, "You need not read your instructions to us, they are no law." In New

York itself the work went boldly on. Cornbury had stolen the public money, and the people obtained from the Crown permission to appoint a treasurer of their own to take charge of appropriations for extraordinary purposes. They had also made another bold demand. Imitating the example of the English House of Commons, they had denied the right of the council, as an upper house, to amend any money bill.

But it was after the trial of Makemie that they first took the bold position which they maintained until the revolution. The Assembly which met in 1708 passed a set of resolutions, which form the key-note of all the subsequent resistance of the colonies. Two of these resolutions, which Bancroft dismisses with a single line, should be inscribed in letters of gold on the title-page of every history of American liberty.

Resolved, That it is, and always has been, the unquestionable right of every freeman in this colony, that he hath a perfect and entire property in his goods and estate.

Resolved, That the imposing and levying of any moneys upon her Majesty's subjects of this colony, under any pretence or color whatsoever, without consent in General Assembly, is a grievance and a violation of the people's property.

This was no utterance of a private individual, but the solemn declaration of the General Assembly of New York; and in estimating New York's position in the great contest for liberty, we must remember that these resolutions were published more than fifty years before James Otis made his famous speech in Boston, or Patrick Henry delivered his inspired philippic in Richmond denying the right of Parliament to tax America.

But the New York Assembly were not content with empty resolutions. Up to this time they had been accustomed to pass revenue bills, as they were called, which gave to the government for a term of years, ranging from two to six, a fixed sum for its support. The money thus appropriated was expended by the Governor and Council, substantially as they saw fit. But now all this was coming to an end. A few

months after the passage of the famous resolutions of 1708 the odious Cornbury was removed. The next year the revenue expired by limitation. To the consternation of Cornbury's successor, the Assembly announced that they would pass no more such bills. They stated that they would only grant an annual supply, as was done in England; that the money appropriated should be collected by their own treasurer, and not by the collector of the Crown, and should be disbursed under their own direction.

Now, the contest was fairly opened, which was to close only with the revolution, and it must be remembered that in this contest New York, for many years, stood comparatively alone. Against the position of the Assembly the Governor, in turns, stormed and entreated, threatened and cajoled, but all in vain; he showed his instructions and talked of his honor pledged to their enforcement. The Assembly only answered by the re-assertion of their rights. Then the Governor appealed to England with a result little noticed in history. In 1711, fifty-four years before the passage of the Stamp Act, the English Administration, fearful lest the contagion of this colony's example should extend to the other plantations, by order of the Queen, introduced into Parliament a bill for the taxation of New York.

However, Parliament was not yet prepared for such a policy, and the bill, though pressed for two years, was never passed. If its introduction was intended as a menace, it failed in its effects. For four years more the dead-lock continued; the public debts were not discharged; even the official salaries remained unpaid; but at length the contest was terminated by the surrender, not of the refractory Assembly, but of the royal Governor himself. In 1715, a revenue bill for five years was passed, which provided that the money appropriated should be collected and disbursed by the Colonial Treasurer, Abraham DePeyster, and the Governor gave his word of honor, as a gentleman, that it should be expended as the Assembly should direct. The Assembly con-

sented to a five years' revenue in exchange for the Governor's assent to an act which was much desired by them, but opposed by the Crown, for naturalizing all foreigners in the colony.

For the next seventeen years little of public interest occurred, for the people remained undisturbed in the rights which they had gained. There were in this period only a few ripples on the surface, but these show the force and direction of the current. One Governor attempted to interfere with the right of the Assembly to judge of the qualifications of their own members, but quickly receded before a storm of public indignation. Later on the Council questioned some members about a vote which they had given, but the Assembly answered by a resolution, "That for any act, matter or thing done in General Assembly the members thereof are accountable and answerable to the House only, and to no other person or persons whatsoever." During this time also the people manifested so much opposition to the Court of Chancery, which they claimed was illegal, because created without consent of the Assembly, that its fees were so reduced, in the language of Smith, the historian, as to cause their wheels thereafter to rust upon their axis.

In 1732, Colonel William Cosby arrived in the colony as Governor of the Royal Provinces. In speaking of him it is only fair to the memory of Cornbury to say, that history is undecided which of the two the more disgraced the commission which he bore. As Cornbury's name is associated with the trial of Makemie, so is Cosby's with the still better known prosecution of Zenger.

Upon this great event I need not dwell. The story has been so often told that the whole scene rises before us at the mere mention of the name of this obscure German printer. We see him committed to prison for libelling the obnoxious Governor, and yet passing new manuscript through the gratings of his cell. We see his counsel, the ablest lawyers in the Province, disbarred by an arbitrary order of the Judges for

questioning their commissions, which were afterwards pronounced illegal by the authorities in England.

The day of trial comes ; we see business suspended in the little city ; we see the court-house crowded to suffocation with a breathless audience, while the multitude surges around the doors and windows. At the last moment, when hope seems lost, for the prisoner is almost undefended, the crowd opens, a lane is formed, and Andrew Hamilton, of Philadelphia, the leader of the American bar, stands by the printer who to-day represents the freedom of the press. We tremble as we hear the brave old man sweep away all technical defence, by admitting the publication, but our fear is changed to admiration—almost to awe—as his argument proceeds. We see audience and jury moved by his words as a field of grain by the breeze. We see them convulsed by his sarcasm, trembling at his pathos. We almost sympathize with the judges as we see them quailing before his denunciations. At last the old man eloquent sits down, and we hear the cowed chief justice mumbling his flimsy charge. The jury retire, and in a moment return. Amid silence as of the grave we hear the verdict, “Not Guilty.” Then the court-house is awakened by a shout like that which resounded through Westminster Hall at the acquittal of the “Seven Bishops.”

This trial founded the freedom of the American press. Twelve years before Benjamin Franklin had been driven from Boston for a libel on its hierarchy. His brother was imprisoned for a month, and forbidden to publish his paper except under official supervision. But all this was now ended—the colonial press was free.

Glancing now rapidly at events after the trial of Zenger, we notice a new stimulus given to the cause of colonial liberty. We have seen how, as early as 1709, the Assembly raised the question of an annual supply bill, but that it was then abandoned for concessions considered more important. Now, however, the people saw that a fixed revenue once granted, if only for five years, rendered their Governors in a measure in-

dependent, arbitrary and unmanageable. In 1738, the five years revenue granted to Cosby before the Zenger trial expired, and again the Assembly returned to the scheme of an annual appropriation, which they were never thereafter to abandon. Governors raged, the Board of Trade and Cabinet protested and threatened, but the people were unmoved ; and after a contest of nearly twenty years' duration Great Britain yielded from pure exhaustion.

The subsequent steps toward independence of the Crown were marked and rapid. In 1748, Governor Shirley, of Massachusetts, who visited New York, writes of the Assembly : " They seem to have left scarcely any part of His Majesty's prerogative untouched, and they have gone great lengths toward getting the Government, military as well as civil, into their hands." In 1750, Governor Clinton writes : " It is not in the power of any Governor on the present footing of affairs to support his authority in this province."

Meantime a new administration had come into power in England. The Duke of Newcastle, who had acted as Secretary of State for the Colonies for twenty-four years, and who, it was said, addressed letters to the Island of New England, and thought Jamaica was somewhere in the Mediterranean, had retired from office. However, his successors knew but little more about the affairs of America, or the spirit of the people ; after hearing the complaints of the Governors of New York, and after a long deliberation, they sagely concluded that only a little firmness was needed to recover all the ground won by her stubborn Legislature. They therefore decided to send out a new Governor with more stringent instructions. The tragic sequel showed the impotence of this conclusion. Sir Danvers Osborne, brother-in-law to the Earl of Halifax, was selected for the office.

On the 7th of October, 1753, Osborne arrived in New York ; on the 10th he took the oath of office, and on the same day received an address from the City Council declaring that they would not " brook any infringement of their ines-

timable liberties, civil and religious." On the next day he summoned his Council and laid before them his instructions, which required the Assembly "to recede from all encroachments on the prerogative," to establish a permanent revenue, and provided that all money should be applied by the Governor with the consent of his Council; the Assembly having no right even to examine the accounts. Already he doubted his powers to carry out his mission. Sadly he asked the Council if these instructions would be obeyed. All agreed that the people never would submit. He sighed, turned about, reclined against the window frame, and exclaimed, "then why am I come here?"

Morbidly sensitive, conscientious and jealous of his word, there seemed to his mind, already shaken by domestic sorrow, but one resource. The next morning found him lifeless, strangled by his own hand. On his table was found a paper with these words: "*Quem deus vult perdere prius dementat.*" Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad. Did he speak of himself or of England's relation to the colonies?

With the suicide of Sir Danvers Osborne, ended the attempt to rule America by the royal prerogative. The contest which overthrew it, began, was waged and terminated in New York. Bancroft, while he slights the events which led up to the result, admits that New York was then the central point of political interest, and that in no province was the near approach of independence so clearly discerned and so openly predicted, at a time when the hope of it as a near event, in New England had not dawned.

We now come to the last chapter in the history, that of resistance to the British Parliament. Of this period we cannot complain that it has been overlooked, but I believe it is crowded with more misrepresentations than you can find in the history of any other country for an equal number of years.

First, take the French and Indian war. The French asserted title to the whole valley of the Ohio by virtue of prior

occupation. What was England's claim upon the question? Not prior discovery, as is usually asserted. Chief Justice Marshall has shown the absurdity of claiming to the Pacific Ocean because Cabot sailed along the Atlantic coast in 1497. No, England asserted title to the whole Western country, because the Six Nations who lived along this valley held it by conquest, and they were subjects or allies of Great Britain. This was her only claim, and it was set forth in official documents and maps circulated among the Courts of Europe. In our history this fact becomes of the first importance. England maintained the title to the Great West. After our revolution the question of its ownership arose, and the conflicting rights of the adverse claimants barred the way to a federal union. Then New York, which, as successor to the Six Nations, was the only State having a valid title, exhibited a generosity unparalleled in history. While the other States were haggling over terms, she stepped forward, and as a free gift, donated the whole territory unconditionally to the United States. That act made the Union possible, yet how much of the truth do you find in your common histories?

Now, look at some of the other events in the days which followed the French and Indian War. That conflict doubled England's debt. The men who paid the taxes naturally sought to shift the burden on some one else, and concluded to tax America. In 1764 the Stamp Act was agreed on by the Ministry, but postponed for a single year. In 1765 it was introduced and became a law; four months thereafter, the House of Burgesses of Virginia, led by Patrick Henry, passed a set of resolutions against the act, asserting their right of self taxation. Mr. Wirt, in that fascinating romance, entitled the Life of Patrick Henry, quotes the great Virginian orator as authority for the statement that this was the first colonial opposition to the act, that the other colonies had remained silent, and that, by these resolutions, Mr. Henry gave the first impulse to the ball of the revolution. I would be the last person to detract from Patrick Henry's fame, for I

believe that he thought his resolutions led the colonial protests ; but Mr. Wirt, and others who have copied him, should have known the truth. In fact, New York had done all this a year before. In October, 1764, hearing of the proposal to pass the act, the New York Assembly sent a petition to Parliament so bold and revolutionary that no one dared to introduce it with the petitions from the other colonies. They claimed for their constituents "that great badge of English liberty, the being taxed only with their own consent." They disdained the thought of claiming this exemption as a privilege. "They found it on a basis more honorable, solid and stable ; they challenge it, and glory in it as their right." No wonder that Massachusetts was chagrined when she compared these sentiments with the diffidence and want of spirit shown in her petition. No wonder that Bancroft, in distributing his honors, says : "Massachusetts entreated to union ; New York pointed to independence."

But New York did more than to pass resolutions by the Assembly. On the 31st of October, 1765, her merchants united in the famous agreement to import no more goods from Great Britain until the Stamp Act should be repealed. Her example was followed by the merchants of Philadelphia on the 7th of November, and by those of Boston on December 9th. This measure first conceived and carried out by New York, put an end to all British trade with the colonies. The London merchants dealing with America saw ruin staring them in the face. They appealed to Parliament, and under their appeal the odious act was formally rescinded.

The repeal of the Stamp Act was received in the colonies with unbounded joy. But this feeling was of short duration, for the people soon learned that it was only the measure, not the principle, which had been abandoned. As part of the general system adopted for the establishment of a standing army in the country, several regiments were sent to America, and an act was passed requiring the colonies, where they were quartered, to provide for their support. New York led the

resistance to this measure, and, in consequence of her action, Parliament, by a special statute, suspended her Legislature from its functions.

About the same time was passed the law imposing a duty on glass, paper and tea, and another act established a Board of Customs for America, which was located at Boston, then a great seaport of the colonies. This shifted the scene of active resistance to Massachusetts, and explains why Boston afterward became so prominent. Against sturdy New York the Ministry had fought in vain; under her blows the prerogative had been shattered forever; before the policy of her merchants, the Stamp Act had suffered an ignominious defeat; it was now purposed to seek a new battle ground, and select another method of attack.

I have no time to even sketch the subsequent events down to the revolution, but at the risk of wearying your patience must mention a few of the more important facts which history has misrepresented.

The first collision between the citizens and soldiers, and the first bloodshed of the revolution, occurred in 1770, but not in Boston, as the school books tell us. The Boston massacre—as it is called—took place on the 5th of March, but the first struggle, with loss of life, occurred six weeks earlier, on the 19th of January, in the City of New York. We call it the battle of Golden Hill. This, however, was but a chance event—like the arrival of the first cargo of tea in Boston, while the vessel intended for New York was driven off by adverse winds. Here the people stood ready to make a tea-pot of their harbor, but Boston got the first drawing by an accident.

But two other matters of which I wish to speak are of a different character; they illustrate the falsity of history in a more serious phase.

The Act of 1767, imposing a duty on glass, paper, and tea, was followed by another non-importation agreement like its predecessor initiated by New York, and subsequently adopted by the other colonies. In March, 1770, all the obnoxious

duties were removed except that on tea. Four months thereafter, the people of New York, by a popular vote, resolved to modify their agreement to import no goods from England, so that it should apply to tea alone.

The announcement of this resolve was greeted through the colonies with a strain of real or affected indignation: "Send us your old Liberty Pole," said Philadelphia, "as you can have no further use for it." The Bostonians tore the letter to shreds and threw it to the winds, while South Carolina read it with disdainful anger. History has reiterated that New York was becoming lukewarm; and no wonder, if writers like Mr. Wirt told the facts in describing the fidelity with which the other colonies adhered to the agreement. But what shall we say of the historic muse when we have examined the records? All the colonies had signed the agreement to import no goods from England. Yet South Carolina, which was so indignant, Georgia, Maryland and Virginia had imported more than they had done before, while Pennsylvania and New England had imported nearly half as much. New York alone—and Bancroft sustains the statement made by Lord North in Parliament—had been perfectly true to her engagements, and had not imported the value of a penny. In consequence her trade had fallen to less than one-sixth of its former volume, and the grass was literally growing in her streets. Is there in all history a nobler instance of the honor which keeps its promise to its own hurt? Now, what did this honor still require? The agreement was useless when kept by only one member of the confederacy—it ruined herself, and was without effect on England. Instead, therefore, of evading it by secret violations as the other colonies had done, the merchants of New York came out openly, and withdrew from the unequal compact.

The other event occurred four years later. In 1774, Parliament passed the bill closing the port of Boston to all trade. The Bostonians then proposed that the non-importation agreement should be revived. To this measure New York

expressed a dissent, and here again she has been accused of being lukewarm. This charge is as unfounded as the other. New York saw the futility of such separate agreements. Their day was past ; it was but fighting the British people with wisps of straw that the winds would scatter. New York had a wiser and a broader plan. She proposed a Congress of all the colonies to devise measures for the public defence. This was acceded to ; the Congress met ; it bound the thirteen colonies into one people ; two years thereafter its successor put forth the Declaration of Independence.

This is the legacy that New York has given to America.

Of New York's part in the revolution I have no time to speak. On another occasion I attempted to tell something of that story. But you here who have studied with the intensity of a personal interest the campaign of 1777, and the Battle of Oriskany, comparing the facts with the accounts given in the common histories, can judge whether Walpole was far wrong in saying "anything but history, that must be false."

In nothing which I have said this evening have I intended a reflection upon the other colonies. I would lift New York to her proper level ; but not, if I could, by dragging down her sisters. The fame of each is the common heritage of all. We are not New Yorkers, nor Virginians, nor New Englanders ; the history of a hundred years has given us a prouder title—we are all Americans.

But aside from this there is another bond of union ; we are united by the ties of a common ancestry. Most of the American colonies were settled by Englishmen, who pride themselves on their Anglo-Saxon blood. The Normans gave to society but a thin veneer upon the surface. The blood of the Anglo-Saxon gave the muscle and the brawn. This is the blood which gave to England, Milton, and Bacon and Shakespeare, Cromwell and Hampden and Pitt ; which gave to America, Washington, Jefferson and Adams, Webster, Clay and Lincoln. But the Dutchmen who founded New

York were of the same descent ; they, too, were Anglo-Saxons of the bluest unmixed blood. Their cousins crossed the English Channel. They remained on the land which their fathers conquered. They were the Batavians of ancient history, on whom the Roman tax gatherer never levied tribute. The other tribes became subjects of Rome, they were never aught but allies ; Cæsar called them the bravest of his soldiers, and well he might, for they turned the tide of battle at Pharsalia. They were the tribe which worshipped but one God, and established universal suffrage. There is nothing, therefore, in their history, there is nothing in the history of New York, when truly written, which should cause surprise. The Dutch revolution of the sixteenth century, the English revolution of the seventeenth, and the American revolution of the eighteenth century, are but chapters in one history, battles in one campaign ; the great contest of the Anglo-Saxon race for a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, my task is done, the further elaboration of this subject remains with your society, and, as a New Yorker, I feel happy to entrust it to such hands.

Your society has a great work before it, but it sets out with advantages possessed by none other in the State. You are fortunate in a President who, with eloquent tongue and classic pen, has done more to make the greatness of New York's history familiar than any man now living. About you every foot of soil is historic ground. Here has ever been the seat of empire of the continent.

Before you is the task of rescuing from oblivion the fleeting memorials of the past, which to the future historian will be priceless treasures. Of this I need not speak, for the paper read by your able Secretary a few weeks ago upon this subject leaves nothing to be said. But you have another duty, to my mind, even more important than that of gathering materials for history. It is that of making the rising gener-

ation appreciate the grandeur of the past. Almost servile in following European systems of education, our youths can give you the names of the Roman emperors, can trace the dynasties of France, or tell you how constitutional government arose in England ; but the growth of liberty at home, or the genesis of our written constitutions, the greatest political discovery of modern times, is to them as much of a sealed book as to a graduate of Oxford or Berlin. This should not be, and societies like yours can correct the evil. We owe this duty not alone to the scholar, but to every citizen of our native State. "History," says Bacon, "makes men wise ;" but it does much more, it makes them patriotic. The Greeks fought more bravely as they thought of Thermopylæ and Marathon. We shall live more nobly as we think of our heroic ancestors, who, by a contest extending over nearly two centuries, laid broad and deep the foundations of our freedom.

ONEIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

1879.

Men of Early Rome.

BY

D. E. WAGER.

ONEIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

MEN, EVENTS, LAWYERS, POLITICS AND POLITICIANS OF EARLY ROME.

BY
D. E. WAGER.


AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE ONEIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AT
UTICA, N. Y., JANUARY 28, 1879.

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1879.

At a regular meeting of the Oneida Historical Society, held January 28, 1879, after the transaction of business, Mr. D. E. Wager, of Rome, one of the Councilors of the Society, read an address upon "The Men, Events, Lawyers, Politics and Politicians of Early Rome." At the conclusion of the address, on motion of M. M. Jones, it was

Resolved, That the Oneida Historical Society extends its hearty thanks to Mr. D. E. Wager for his address upon the Men and Events of Early Rome, which it regards as one of the most valuable additions to the History of Oneida County;

Resolved, That Mr. Wager be requested to furnish a copy of his address for publication.



MEN, EVENTS, LAWYERS, POLITICS AND POLITICIANS OF EARLY ROME.*

BY D. E. WAGER.

At the close of the Revolutionary War, and at the time of the adoption of the United States Constitution, the State of New York was considerably less democratic than any other State in the Union. There was more of aristocracy in this State than in any other. The wealthy and influential families of the Coldens, the Morrises, the Schuylers, the Livingstons, the Van Cortlands, the Van Rensselaers and Sir William Johnson, with their large landed possessions, and deriving a princely support from a numerous tenantry, had infused into a large class of the people different manners and currents of thought, and made an impress upon the age and condition of things which required years to eradicate. The great mass of the people were looked upon by that landed gentry with distrust, and as incapable of self-government; and hence, the State Constitution in force in this State, down to 1822, gave to the people the rights of suffrage in a gingerly manner, and to a very limited extent. Aside from certain town officers the people elected by ballot only Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, State Senators, members of Assembly, and Congressmen; and to vote for Governor, Lieutenant-Governor and Senators a person must, for six months before election, have possessed a freehold of the value of \$250, over and above all debts charged thereon; and to vote for Congressmen and Assemblymen he must for the same period of time, possess a freehold of the value of \$50, or have rented a tenement of the yearly value of \$5, and actually paid taxes to the State. All of the other officers in county or State were appointed. The

*This address had been previously delivered by Mr. Wager before the Young Men's Christian Association of Rome, January 13, 1879, and was read by him before the Utica Young Men's Christian Association February 4, 1879.

State appointing body was called "*The Council of Appointment*," and was constituted as follows: The State was divided into four Senatorial districts, called the eastern, western, southern and middle districts, and each year the Assembly selected a Senator from each of those districts, and the four Senators thus selected (with the Governor) made such "Council of Appointment." The Governor had no vote, except in case of a tie. The journals of that body, still preserved in the Secretary of State's office, at Albany, showing its appointments, removals and doings, fill fourteen manuscript volumes. In addition to some eight thousand military officers, that body appointed about seven thousand civil and judicial officers, consisting of the Secretary of State, Attorney General, Surveyor General, Comptroller, Chancellor, Masters and Examiners in Chancery, Judges of the Supreme Court, Judges of the Common Pleas in each of the counties, Sheriffs, County Clerks, Surrogates, District Attorneys, Coroners, Mayors and Recorders of cities, and Justices of the Peace.

Yes, so jealous or mistrustful were the constitution and law makers of the people, as to their capacity and intelligence in regard to the elective franchise, that even down to 1821, when the State Constitution was framed in that year, that instrument did not allow Justices of the Peace to be elected; but instead thereof, bestowed the power of their appointment upon the Board of Supervisors and Judges of the Common Pleas. It was not until 1826 that the people obtained a sufficient recognition of their claim to elect their own town officers, to wring from the Legislature a constitutional amendment to be submitted to the people, as to whether Justices of the Peace should be elected. In a poll of one hundred and thirty thousand votes, cast that year on that submitted question, the majority in its favor in the State was over one hundred and twenty-eight thousand. Oneida County gave three thousand six hundred and ninety-one for, to only six votes against it. The State Treasurer was appointed by a legislative enactment, naming the appointee in the act, and passed

expressly for the purpose, each time the office was filled. County Treasurers and Loan Commissioners were appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

As a further evidence of the distrust entertained of the people, and the small voice they had in the nomination even, of those officers for whom they could vote, and as showing the self-perpetuating power of the office-holders, it may be stated that the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor were not nominated as now, by a State Convention of delegates from each county in the State, but by a caucus of their political friends in the Legislature; or by a public meeting of the citizens, friendly to the nominee, in Albany or New York, just as it happened, and no one else but those citizens taking part therein. State Senators, down to 1811, were nominated by a caucus held at Albany of the members of Assembly from the Senatorial districts; and if a political party in a Senatorial district was unrepresented in the Assembly, it had to get its candidate for Senator in the field as best it could. Assemblymen were nominated and elected by the county at large, and not as now, by districts. The President and Vice President of the United States were nominated by a caucus of their friends in Congress, and not as now, by National Conventions. The Presidential Electors were appointed by the State Legislature, and not as now, elected by the people.

The appointment of such a host of officials gave an immense power and influence to the appointing body, and tended to make a strong government, and to keep political power in the hands of the few. The Chancellor, Supreme Court Judges, and First Judges of the Common Pleas, were appointed during good behavior, or until the appointee reached the age of sixty years. Sheriffs and Coroners were annually appointed; Surrogates for an unlimited time. The number of side Judges of the Common Pleas, and of Justices of the Peace, was unlimited, and sometimes as many as a dozen side Judges in a county were holding office at a time.

This process enabled the dominant party to provide places for its friends.

This state of things continued from the commencement of the Revolutionary War down to the adoption of the State Constitution in January, 1822. That instrument received a majority in the State of nearly thirty-four thousand, although there were forty-one thousand persons who voted against it. Oneida County, strongly federal as she ever had been, yet gave one thousand majority in its favor. Rome gave two hundred and twenty-four votes for, to forty-four against that constitution.

Under that constitution radical changes were made (and since then greater) in the system and management of the government. It was also the means of producing great changes in the politics, and in the power and influence of the politicians in the county and State. Although but a few if any more officers were made elective, yet the mode of the nomination of those who were elected, as well as the manner of the appointment of the others, was changed. The civil and political year was altered from July to January; new Senatorial and Assembly districts were formed; the right of suffrage was extended; the judiciary system was remodeled, resulting in taking from the Supreme Court Judges the political power which they had long exercised, and of breaking up the practice which had prevailed, of taking from the bench of that court nominees for Governor; and the time of holding State elections was changed from April to November. These various changes virtually annihilated a power which, for nearly half a century, had distributed the fruits of victory and the spoils of office in almost every school district in the State, and made the central power at the Capital the controlling one, in the selection of officers, from the highest to the lowest. The power of the few was, by that constitution of 1821, broken into fragments, and thereafter the voice of the people was to be heard and respected in the several and respective localities. It was a revolution almost as

great as that of the Colonies, yet it was accomplished only after the most violent discussion and agitation of the questions involved.

From the foregoing, it will be seen, that the political system in vogue in New York, from the close of the Revolutionary War down to the going into effect of the Constitution of 1821, was well calculated to have a depressing influence upon the great mass of the people, and to keep in the back ground, all except those who by their eminent talents and ability, towered head and shoulders above their fellows. The system was one out of which "regencies," "rings" and self perpetuating "cliques" would naturally be formed, and when a few prominent leaders could dictate or control the appointments to office, and thereby manipulate and control the political affairs of the whole State. The two political parties in this State, when Oneida County was formed, were known as Republicans and Federalists. At the head of the former was George Clinton, Governor of the State of New York from 1777 to 1795. The leaders of the Federalists were Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and the most of the aristocratic families before named. The election in 1800 of Thomas Jefferson, President, if it did not destroy, it broke the backbone of that party, so that it did not after that year, elect a Governor of its own in this State, nor did it even run one of its own distinctive notions, but two or three times. The political struggle was mainly between the leaders in the Republican ranks, as to who should be master, nor was there any particular principle involved, except those made by the war of 1812, the Erie canal, the convention and constitution of 1821. In the various contests from the organization of Oneida County, until after adoption of the constitution of 1821, the county almost invariably voted for the Federal ticket or its sympathizers, while Rome just as uniformly voted the other way.

Starting then, with the organization of Rome as a town in 1796 at a time when the country was new, the population scattered, and

the number of residents in the county eminent for their talents and abilities very few indeed, I intend to mention and to briefly sketch those who have resided in Rome, and have made their impress upon the times in which they have lived, or who have otherwise arisen to prominence in the history of the county within the first thirty or forty years of Rome's existence as a town.

I shall endeavor to give the names in the order of the time the persons came to Rome, as near as may be, or else in the order each came into prominence in the county. And as I progress, it will be observed that most of the persons named are the common property of Rome and Utica, and that both cities are entitled to be proud of and to claim them.

MAJOR WILLIAM COLBRATH.

Soon after the close of the Revolutionary War, a jolly Irishman, who had rendered service to the Colonies in that struggle, pushed his way westwardly, from what is now the village of Herkimer, into what was then called "the Whitestown country." As early as in April 1790, Major William Colbrath was living in the town of Whitestown, which then included all of the State west of what is now the Herkimer County line. The town records show, that at the town meeting held April 6, 1790, in Captain Needham Maynard's barn, in the town of Whitestown, William Colbrath received fifty votes for the office of Supervisor, and Jedediah Sanger thirty-four, and a full town meeting ticket was then and there chosen and declared elected. The records further state "that as many people being deprived of the privilege of voting for Supervisor, it was moved to have the proceedings of the day made null and void, which passed in the affirmative." The meeting was then adjourned to the next day at 10 A. M. The town meeting was held on such next day, the polls held open until 5 P. M., and on counting the votes it was found that one hundred and

nineteen votes were cast for Jedediah Sanger for Supervisor, and none for any one else, for that office, and so he was declared elected. Mr. Colbrath was therefore Supervisor for less than a day. The foregoing from Jones' "Annals of Oneida County," shows how queerly the electors did things in those days, and it is the first mention I find of Mr Colbrath. In the County Clerk's office of Oneida County, I find recorded a power of attorney, from Baron Steuben of New York City, bearing date, June 1, 1791, to Mr. William Colbrath, and describing the latter as yeomen of Whitestown, giving the latter full power and authority to bargain and sell lands of the former, and to prosecute for trespasses committed upon the lands of the Baron in the County of Herkimer. This instrument is witnessed by the subscribing signatures of David Starr (after whom "Starr hill" in Steuben is named) and Benjamin Wright, a Roman, and from which it is inferred that Mr. Colbrath must then have resided near Fort Stanwix, as he certainly did a few years later, for in 1796 he had a deed of one hundred and sixty acres of land, just east of what is now "Factory Village" in Rome, and which land formerly belonged to Governor George Clinton, and which land Mr. Colbrath sold to Dominick Lynch, the year Oneida County was formed. Those who have the curiosity to examine the first book of mortgages in this county, will find a mortgage on record to Mr. Colbrath, covering a couple of acres of land in Coxe's patent, and also a large list of household articles, evidently mortgaged to Mr. Colbrath (who was also Sheriff at the time) to screen them from an execution sale of some unfeeling creditor, for the articles were (in part) as follows: "three feather beds, three underbeds with cords, six linen sheets, five Indian blankets, three *chists*, one pewter pot, one earthen tea pot, one earthen coffee pot, five yards of flannel, &c., &c.

Mr. Colbrath was the first Sheriff of Herkimer County, appointed in February, 1791, and which county then also included what is now Oneida County. He held that office until 1795, when he was succeeded by Peter Smith, then of Utica, father of Gerrit Smith. It was while Mr. Colbrath was such Sheriff, that the first

term of a Court of Record was held within the limits of what is now Oneida County. It was the Herkimer Common Pleas, and was held at what is now the village of New Hartford, in a barn, or in an unfinished meeting house, and was in January, 1794. The weather was bitterly cold, and the room where the court was held was illy prepared for the inclemency of the weather. Towards night, bench, bar and spectators were nearly frozen out; and to keep the lawyers warm, Sheriff Colbrath passed quietly among them, a jug of spirits. The Judge had told the crier to adjourn the court until next day, when Mr. Colbrath, hearing the order, and forgetting or else unmindful of the dignity of the court and the proprieties of the occasion, called out, "oh, no, no, no, don't adjourn yet, Judge, take some gin, it will keep you warm, Judge;" and suiting the action to the advice, passed the jug to the bench. There was not the romance to it that there was in Maud Muller's case; nevertheless the Court partook, and doubtless thought, if it did not say

"Thanks to you, for a sweeter draught
From a kinder hand was never quaffed."

Oneida County was formed March 15, 1798, and four days thereafter, Mr. Colbrath was appointed its first Sheriff, and held the office until the close of the year. I have obtained nothing further relative to him, but he seems entitled to a place in this record, if for no other reason than that he was the first Sheriff of the two counties above named, and the additional fact that he was the only Roman who held that office (except Israel S. Parker in 1843 and 1844) for the first seventy years after the organization of Oneida County.

BENJAMIN WRIGHT.

Benjamin Wright, who figured prominently in after years as a surveyor and engineer, came to Fort Stanwix in 1790, when twenty years old. His father's family came from Connecticut the

previous year, and located in what is now familiarly known as "Wright Settlement." Benjamin had remained behind to attend school and study surveying, for which he had a natural taste and aptitude, and which profession promised to be useful and profitable in this then new country, but rapidly settling up. The various owners of the Patents and tracts in this section, were at that time, sub-dividing their lands into lots, laying them out into farms, for the accommodation of the settlers. From 1796 to 1800 Mr. Wright was engaged in surveying in what are now Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Oswego and St. Lawrence counties, including Macomb's great purchase of near four million acres in the northern part of the State. In what was then Oneida County, he surveyed out into farms, over five hundred thousand acres, before he was twenty-six years of age; and when the above named counties were formed, he surveyed out their boundaries.

In 1804 occurred the gubernatorial contest in this State, between Morgan Lewis and Aaron Burr—both republicans. Mr. Lewis, at the time of his running, was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and Aaron Burr was Vice President of the United States. There was no political principle involved in the election. Benjamin Wright ran for the Assembly in this county, on the Burr ticket; on the other ticket was Gen. Walter Martin, of Martinsburgh, then a part of Oneida County. Without counting the vote of the town of Adams, then also in Oneida County, Mr. Wright and Mr. Martin had received in the county, an equal number of votes, making the vote between them a tie. The whole number of votes cast in the town of Adams was thirty-four, and all of those were for "*Benj.*" Wright, and the question was, whether they should be counted for *Benjamin* Wright. The County Clerk returned the above facts to the Assembly, and that body, on the second day of its session, awarded the seat to Mr. Wright. At that time there was no newspaper office nearer Adams than Utica, and quite likely the ballots for that town were written, and hence the given name of Mr. Wright abbreviated as above. Mr. Wright was the

first Roman elected to the Assembly after the organization of Oneida County. Mathew Brown, Jr., a Roman, had been elected, in 1796 and 1797, when Rome was a part of Herkimer County, and at a time when the Legislature met in New York City. Mr. Brown was the first postmaster of Rome. The election of 1804 resulted in favor of Morgan Lewis, by eight thousand five hundred majority. Rome gave Lewis ninety-six votes, and Burr thirty-three; it gave Walter Martin one hundred and fifty-four, and Mr. Wright one hundred and forty-one—which indicate about the number of freehold voters in Rome at that time. Out of that contest grew the duel between Burr and Hamilton, which occurred within three months after that election, resulting in the killing of Hamilton and the consequent ostracism and ruination of Burr. In a few years thereafter he was a prisoner, on trial for treason to the United States Government, a political outcast and fugitive wanderer in strange lands and foreign parts. The next contest for Governor, was in 1807, between Morgan Lewis and Daniel D. Tompkins—both republicans, and with no political principle involved. Tompkins was Judge of the Supreme Court, while running for the office of Governor, as Morgan Lewis was three years before. Benjamin Wright ran again for the Assembly this year, on the ticket with Morgan Lewis, and was elected in the county, although Mr. Lewis was defeated in the State by four thousand majority. In 1808 Mr. Wright was again elected to the Assembly. The Erie Canal question at that time was beginning to attract considerable attention. While in the Legislature, he seconded a resolution appropriating one thousand dollars for a survey of the Erie Canal route. The bill passed the Assembly, but the Senate cut the appropriation down to six hundred dollars. Think of it, six hundred dollars to pay the expense of a survey of a route of three hundred and sixty miles, and much of the way through a wilderness! In these days it would hardly pay for a champagne supper that would be given in glorification of the passage of an appropriation bill. But legislators and the people were then economical and unaccustomed to lavish expenditures; and besides, the great mass and most intelligent of the

people looked upon the scheme of a canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson River as wild, visionary and impractical. The patriotic Governor Daniel D. Tompkins opposed it. A committee from this State, in January, 1809, called on President Jefferson, to influence him and his administration in behalf of the project, and after all the surveys, estimates and portrayal of the commercial prospects had been laid before the President, even he coolly answered, "It is a splendid project, and may be executed a century hence." "Why," said he, "here is a canal, of a few miles, projected by General Washington, which has languished, and yet you think of making a canal *three hundred and fifty* miles through a *wilderness*. It is little short of madness to think of it." The friends of the measure did think of it nevertheless, and in 1810 the Legislature appointed De Witt Clinton and others to cause the route to be explored, which they did, and reported favorably in 1812. Now came the question to get a competent engineer to lay out the canal, for it was considered that none competent could be found in the United States. William Weston, of England, had been to this country and laid out the Western Inland Canal. He surveyed the lands, while here, of Dominick Lynch, and made a map of Lynchville, now Rome, and laid out the village plot, as reference is made in all of Mr. Lynch's deeds and leases to that map of Mr. Weston. That gentleman was written to in England, to see if he would come, and seven thousand dollars a year salary was offered him, but as he could not then accept the offered engagement, Mr. Wright and Mr. Geddes held a consultation, and both went before the committee and offered their services. They were employed at fifteen hundred dollars per year. The war with England interrupted further proceedings until the termination of hostilities, and so the matter rested.

In 1813 Mr. Wright was appointed one of the Judges of the Common Pleas, probably through the influence of his political friend, Jonas Platt, of Whitesboro, that year a member of the Council of Appointment; but Mr. Wright did not ever give

much attention to judicial duties. In 1816 the canal project was revived by the presentation to the Legislature of a memorial signed by one hundred thousand persons, asking legislative action. The Legislature took action, and Mr. Geddes made a survey of the western, and Mr. Wright of the eastern division; and the levels of the two, where they met, differed less than one inch and a half. The work of construction was commenced in 1817, and those two engineers remained in charge until the work was completed, in 1825.

In 1817 Mr. Wright ran for the Assembly, but was defeated by Henry Huntington, owing to the popularity at that time of DeWitt Clinton and his friends. On the fourth of July that year, the imposing ceremonies of first breaking ground for the construction of the canal took place in Rome, southwesterly of the United States Arsenal, on the old route of that canal. DeWitt Clinton, elected Governor of the State the April before, was present, as were other State dignitaries, and a large concourse of people. Mr. Wright was partner in mercantile pursuits in Rome from 1804 to 1817, at first with Peter Colt, and later with his brother, the late William Wright. He was consulting engineer on a great many works of internal improvements, such as the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, Illinois Canal, the Welland Canal, the Delaware and Hudson Canal, the New York and Erie Railroad and the Harlem Railroad. In 1835 he went to Cuba, to consult as an engineer of a railroad to be built on that island. About 1820 he built, and occupied for his residence until 1825, the first brick dwelling house in Rome west of the Willett House, and which was bought and used as a banking house in 1832, by the Bank of Rome, organized that year. Mr. Wright about 1825 moved to New York, and died in that city in August, 1842, at the age of seventy-two. No one in his day stood higher as an engineer than Benjamin Wright.

GEORGE HUNTINGTON.

The first Rome merchant located at Fort Stanwix early in the spring of 1793, and, for want of other accommodations, opened his stock of goods in the bar room, or an adjoining room, of the tavern then kept by John Barnard, and standing a little north-easterly of the present site of the Court House. George Huntington, then an unmarried man of twenty-three years, was a native of Connecticut, and while he had clerked it the previous year at Whitesboro, had visited the Fort for the purpose of "interviewing" the prospect. Settlers were coming in, the trade with the Indians, then here in great numbers, promised to be good, and so Mr. Huntington, with his brother Henry, then of New York City, as a partner, commenced trade in what is now Rome, at the time above stated. The next year Mr. Huntington erected a frame store and a frame dwelling on Deminick Street, near the corner now known as the "Merrill Block." In looking through the account books of that firm, as I have done from that date down, for many years thereafter, it is interesting and curious to note that many of its retail customers then resided in what are now Oswego, Onondaga, Cayuga, Jefferson and Lewis counties; and it is also worth while to mention, for it is in accordance with the fact, and is true of every other dry goods merchant or dealer fifty, sixty or seventy years ago, that the charges for rum and brandy upon the books of the merchants of those times against the customers, were about as frequent as that of any other commodity kept on hand for sale; and the list of that kind of accounts against members, deacons and elders of churches was about as lengthy as against any other class of customers. Such was the custom of the times half a century and more ago, and it affords a striking contrast with the present times. When Rome was organized as a town, in 1796, Mr. Huntington was elected its first Supervisor. When Oneida County was formed, two years later, he was appointed one of the side Judges of the Common Pleas for the new county, and re-

appointed in 1801, and again in 1804—both times by a republican Council of Appointment. He was elected Supervisor of Rome in 1804, 1814, and in 1817. In 1810 an election of Governor took place; and although it was two years before the war with England commenced, yet that subject was thus early discussed, and the issues or the causes of that war entered largely into that State canvass. Jonas Platt, a federalist and a lawyer of note, and the first County Clerk of Oneida County, then resided at Whitesboro, in this county. The federalists felt confident of carrying the State, so they were early in the field. The fore part of January, of that year, a meeting of the citizens of Albany was held (none but those citizens taking part therein) at which Mr. Platt was nominated for Governor. He had settled at Whitesboro in 1790; and it was calculated that, as he had settled in and grown up with the “great west,” as all this part of the State was then called, he would poll a large vote in the western district, then a republican district. Mr. George Huntington was nominated for the Assembly on the ticket with Mr. Platt. Henry Wager, Senior, of Western, ran for Assembly on the other ticket. Daniel D. Tompkins was re-nominated for Governor in February, by a legislative caucus of his friends, and the contest was sharp and bitter, and conducted with great zeal on both sides. In that contest, as in about every other that has ever taken place in this country, the “war party” was triumphant in the State. Tompkins was elected Governor by about ten thousand majority; Mr. Huntington and his Assembly ticket were elected by about three hundred and fifty majority in the county, but Rome gave fifty the other way.

In 1813 occurred another election for Governor. Daniel D. Tompkins, the “great war Governor” of New York, was renominated, and John Taylor for Lieutenant-Governor. At that time this country was in the midst of a war with England, and the northern frontier of New York was the scene of active military operations. The federalists nominated Stephen Van Rensselaer,

"The Patroon," for Governor, and George Huntington for Lieutenant-Governor, and that party went into the canvass with high hopes of success; for both nominees were highly respectable and entirely unexceptionable in their characters, and there was then, as in the recent war, considerable dissatisfaction with the management of the war. The election was sharply contested, but the "war ticket" was successful in the State by nearly four thousand majority, to the bitter mortification of the federalists, and contrary to the shrewdest calculations of both parties.

Mr. Huntington was collector for the Western Inland Canal from its completion in 1797 to the completion of the Erie Canal from Rome to Utica in 1819.

In 1815 Mr. Huntington ran for the State Senate, in opposition to Henry Seymour, father of Ex-Governor Seymour, but was defeated. He was elected to the Assembly in 1818, 1819, 1820 and 1821, being the years when there was the greatest excitement, growing out of the calling and holding of a convention for a new constitution—the framing of that instrument, and its submission to the people, involving the questions of the elective franchise, and an entire change in the political system in the State; and also during the years of the bitter and exciting gubernatorial contest between DeWitt Clinton and Daniel D. Tompkins in 1820.

Under the new constitution of 1822 Mr. Huntington ran again for Senator, but he and his three associates were defeated by Samuel Beardsley and others. That seems to have been the last time he ran for a political office; and as he had been nine times elected to the Assembly, and discharged the various duties incumbent upon him with credit and honor, he might well be content to retire from the political arena. He was trustee of Rome village in 1820, 1821, 1822, 1826 and 1827. It was about 1816 that he and his brother Henry retired from mercantile business, and devoted the remainder of their lives to looking after a large landed property,

much of it held by them in common, and to taking care of the large property which they had acquired by their prudence and careful industry. Mr. George Huntington died in Rome in September, 1841, at the age of seventy-one years, universally respected and esteemed. He was the father of our worthy and honored townsman, Mr. Edward Huntington.

JOSHUA HATHEWAY.

The Battle of Bennington, in August, 1777, was the first link in the chain of events which led to the flight of St. Leger before Fort Stanwix, the subsequent capture of Burgoyne on the fields of Saratoga, and the consequent frustration of the British plan of that campaign—to separate New York from the New England States. In that battle, under General Stark, was a father and seven of his sons from the State of Connecticut. One of those sons was Joshua Hatheway; he had reached his sixteenth birthday but three days before that battle was fought. Ten years later, and after further service in that war, Joshua Hatheway graduated at Yale College, studied law, was admitted to practice, and, in 1795, came to Fort Stanwix, then in the town of Steuben, Herkimer County, and was admitted to the bar of that county. After the organization of Oneida County, and at the first term of the Oneida Common Pleas, held at the school house in the southeast corner of the West Park, in Rome, he was admitted to that court. In 1798 he was commissioned for the new county, one of the Justices of the Peace, and he was also appointed by the Board of Supervisors the first County Treasurer, and held that office until 1802; and he held various town offices during the twenty-five years thereafter. About 1810 he was appointed by President Madison the second postmaster in Rome, and he held that office through successive administrations for twenty-six years, and until his death. In 1808 he was appointed Surrogate of Oneida, in place of Arthur Breese, a federalist. He was the

first Rome Surrogate, and the second one appointed in the county. It was the same Council of Appointment which, a few days before, had appointed Martin Van Buren Surrogate of Columbia County, DeWitt Clinton Mayor of New York, and Samuel Young Justice of the Peace of Saratoga County—men who, in after years, made their impress upon the history of the State and Nation. A pretty clean sweep was made that year of all the offices in the State, whose incumbents were unfriendly to Governor Tompkins.

In 1813 the federalists obtained the control of the Council of Appointment, and their broom in turn swept out the Tompkins office-holders. In February, of that year, Mr. Hatheway was turned out of the Surrogate's office to make room for Erastus Clark, of Utica. It was the same year and but ten days after, the same council turned out of the office of Attorney-General the eloquent and renowned lawyer, advocate, and Irish exile, Thomas Addis Emmett, and put in his place that able lawyer, Abraham Van Vechten, a dyed in the wool federalist. Mr. Hatheway, this year, went to Sacketts Harbor, as quartermaster in the "Rome Regiment."

In 1814 the Tompkins people carried the Assembly, secured the Council of Appointment, and adopted the most vigorous measures, not only to carry on the war with Great Britain, but to turn out the federal office-holders in the State. In February, 1815, Martin Van Buren was appointed Attorney-General, in place of Mr. Van Vechten, and a month later, Erastus Clark was rotated out of the office of Surrogate of Oneida County, to make room for Mr. Hatheway. Four years later in 1819, in a quarrel in the republican party, between the "Clintonians" and "Bucktails" (anti-Clintonians) Mr. Hatheway was displaced to make room for Greene C. Bronson, then of Vernon, in this county. Although Mr. Clinton in 1820, was elected Governor by about fourteen hundred majority, yet the anti-Clintonians secured the Assembly and the Council of Appointment, and the friends of the Governor had to walk the plank.

In April, 1821, Mr. Bronson was turned out and Mr. Hatheway a third time appointed Surrogate, which position he held until 1827, when his political scalp was again demanded—this time by a Roman, and a young man of talent and promise, just then rising into notice and prominence in the republican ranks, as will be further and more fully noticed, when reference is made to Hon. Henry A. Foster. When Mr. Hatheway was restored to the office of Surrogate, in the spring of 1821, he was also appointed one of the side Judges of the Common Pleas; reappointed in 1823, and again in February, 1828; the last time through the aid and influence of Hon. Henry A. Foster, then Surrogate of the county, and who, being in Albany at the time, with his own hands took the nomination of Mr. Hatheway from Governor DeWitt Clinton to the Senate chamber for confirmation. That same evening Governor Clinton died suddenly in his chair. It was probably his last executive nomination. Mr. Hatheway held that office until 1833.

He was Postmaster twenty-six years, Surrogate thirteen years, Judge of the Common Pleas twelve years, besides holding the office of Justice of the Peace for many years, and all of those offices at the same time for a considerable period. Is it a wonder that the people desired a change, and that they gave nearly thirty-four thousand majority for the new constitution? That he discharged the duties of those offices with exactness is not questioned. He studiously maintained the dignity of the court in which he acted, and exacted respect to the position he held, and the government he represented. It is narrated that whenever the mails arrived for distribution at the Rome post office, he commanded silence on the part of all spectators then present, required them to be seated, and said: "Gentlemen, take off your hats, for the United States mail is now to be opened and distributed." A church congregation was never more respectful, nor a court assemblage more orderly than on such occasions in the Rome post office. Nor need this formality seem strange, for doubtless the memory of some who now hear me goes back to the time, for mine does, when

the presiding judge of the court was escorted to and from the hotel, each forenoon and afternoon session, by the Sheriff, with sheathed sword, accompanied by deputies and constable with long staves, and the Sheriff sat on a raised seat in the court room, with his sword, to preserve order. Mr. Hatheway died in Rome in December, 1836, at the age of seventy-five years.

HENRY HUNTINGTON.

The year Oneida County was formed Henry Huntington, the father of Hon. B. N. Huntington, made Rome his home. In 1800 he was elected Assessor and School Commissioner in Rome. In 1803 Supervisor, and again in 1807. In 1801 he and Joseph Kirkland, of Utica, ran on opposite tickets for members of the constitutional convention, held in October of that year. Without the vote of the town of Mexico, then a part of Oneida County, the number of votes in the county for Mr. Kirkland (a federalist) was seven hundred and forty-eight; for Mr. Huntington, seven hundred and thirty-eight. All of the vote of Mexico (eighteen votes in all) was cast for Mr. Huntington; but only two of the three inspectors of election had signed the return, and Jonas Platt, then County Clerk, and a federalist, gave the certificate of election to Mr. Kirkland. Mr. Huntington contested the seat, and the constitutional convention, presided over by Aaron Burr, then Vice President of the United States, gave it to him. In that contest Rome gave two hundred and seven votes to Mr. Huntington, and none to the other ticket. In 1804 Mr. Huntington was elected to the State Senate, he being the first Senator from Rome. In 1806 he was member of the Council of Appointment, as was DeWitt Clinton that year; and, although a warm personal and political friend of Mr. Clinton, yet he earnestly protested against the wholesale removals from office made that year by his colleagues in that council, for no reason other than that those turned out were friends of Governor Morgan Lewis. Hammond's Political History speaks of Mr. Huntington as a gentleman and politician of great moderation

and prudence, and altogether incapable of persecution or proscription. In 1808 he was chosen by the Legislature Presidential Elector, and of the six votes from New York State given for George Clinton for President, in preference to James Madison, Mr. Huntington's was one. In 1812 he was again appointed Presidential Elector, and all of the votes that year, of this State, were cast for DeWitt Clinton for President.

In 1816 he was elected to the Assembly, and the only one on his ticket. It was this Legislature which passed the law abolishing what remained of slavery in this State, after July 4, 1827. A law had been passed in 1801 for a gradual emancipation, by providing that all persons born of slaves *after* July 4, 1799, (at which time there were twenty thousand slaves in New York State) should be free, except that such persons should, if males, serve as apprentices until they reached twenty-eight years of age, and, if females, until twenty-five; and further providing that slaves could not be witnesses in any case, except against other slaves in criminal trials; and also requiring owners to instruct their slaves, so that the latter could read the Holy Scriptures. The law passed by the Legislature of 1816 emancipated those after July 4, 1827, who were not freed by the law of 1801. In 1817 Mr. Huntington was elected to the Assembly again, his opponent being Benjamin Wright. In June, 1821, he was elected a member of the constitutional convention, which was held in August of that year, and was presided over by Daniel D. Tompkins, the Vice President of the United States. Mr. Huntington was a member of the convention of 1801, also presided over by a Vice President, (Aaron Burr.) In 1822 Joseph C. Yates, a republican, ran for Governor, and was elected by one hundred and twenty-six thousand majority over Solomon Southwick, who was self-nominated. Henry Huntington and Erastus Root ran against each other for Lieutenant-Governor, the contest resulting in the election of Mr. Root. In 1826 DeWitt Clinton was nominated for Governor and Henry Huntington for Lieutenant-Governor. Mr.

Clinton was elected, but Mr. Huntington was defeated by about four thousand, owing to local causes. It seems that a State road had been projected the year previous, to run from the Hudson River to Lake Erie, through the southern tier of counties, and Mr. Pitcher was commissioner of that road; and the friends of that measure fearing that Mr. Huntington was inimical to it, living as he did on the line of the Erie Canal, just then completed, and believed to be a rival route, the southern portion of the State, and the other counties friendly to that road, cast their votes for Mr. Pitcher. Oneida County, however, gave Mr. Huntington eleven hundred majority. As Mr. Huntington had been in pretty active political life for a quarter of a century, this seems to have closed his political career. In fact, he accepted the above nomination with great reluctance, and after much hesitation and persuasion.

The Bank of Utica was chartered in 1812, and the next year he was elected its second President, and held that position until a short time before his death, a period of thirty-two years. He died in Rome in October, 1846, at the age of eighty years. Although Henry and George Huntington were of opposite politics, and so decidedly and prominently that the party of each nominated him as its candidate for Lieutenant-Governor, yet their business and personal relations were never in the least disturbed, and much of their property was owned in common, and in many instances the partnership funds were used to defray the family expenses of each, and no separate account kept thereof.

There was a number of the legal profession, who came to Rome early in the present century, and although they did not stand out in the county prominently as lawyers, nor figure very conspicuously in politics, yet they should be mentioned as among the early members of the Rome bar.

JAMES LYNCH.

Mr. James Lynch graduated at Columbia College in 1799, read law with Joshua Hatheway, and in 1804, was admitted to practice. He opened a law office in Rome, and had charge of his father's lands in this locality. The two main streets in Rome bear the Christian names of father and son—the father when Rome was organized as a town, owning some twenty-five hundred acres of land, which included Fort Stanwix and the site of the whole business portion of Rome. He succeeded from Rome Mr. George Huntington in the Assembly, and was elected on the federal ticket in the years 1813, 1814 and 1815, all through the hardest part of the war. He moved to Utica in 1818, opened a law office there, and about 1820, he became what was called a "high minded federalist," repudiated DeWitt Clinton, and went in for D. D. Tompkins, and in 1822 was elected to the Assembly. It was the year John E. Hinman was elected Sheriff, over S. Newton Dexter, and E. Dorchester, of the Oneida *Observer*, County Clerk over Julius Pond. In 1825 Mr. Lynch moved to New York City, became Judge of the Marine Court, and held that position until his death in 1853, at the age of sixty-seven years.

WHEELER BARNES.

Mr. Barnes was born in Massachusetts; but he came from Vermont to Rome, about 1806, being at that time admitted to practice law. He was elected Supervisor of Rome in 1815, and again in 1816, and in the latter year was elected to the Assembly on the federal ticket. He was a member of that Legislature which abolished slavery, as heretofore mentioned, and which authorized the commencement of the construction of the Erie Canal. In 1822, Mr. Barnes ran again for the Assembly, but that was the first year after the new constitution of 1821 had gone into effect, and it was

not a good year for any politician who still held to his federal notions. Mr. Barnes did quite an extensive law practice for those times, and was for a time law partner of William Curtis Noyes. He was trustee of Rome village in 1822, 1823, 1824 and 1825. Not far from 1837, he resided in Oswego, but in a few years he moved back to Rome, and died here in July 1858, at the age of seventy-six years, and as the inscription upon his tomb-stone in the old burying ground reads, "having been a resident of Rome for fifty years."

JAMES SHERMAN.

In 1806, another native of Massachusetts made Rome his permanent home. Mr. James Sherman, the new comer, was a graduate of Williams College, and when he came to Rome was twenty-six years of age, and was an admitted attorney. For a year or so, and about 1807, he was a law partner of Joshua Hatheway, and was himself a candidate for the office of Surrogate, and had obtained the necessary recommendations to secure his appointment; but, on request, gave way to his partner, who was appointed, as has been heretofore stated. Mr. Sherman was Justice of the Peace for a number of years, and held other town offices, but did not mix much in county or State politics. He died in Rome in 1823, at the age of forty-three. He was father-in-law of Judge Henry A. Foster.

SETH B. ROBERTS.

Two years before Rome was organized into a town, Seth B. Roberts, then a boy of four years old, came with his parents from Middletown, Conn., to Whitestown, and there resided until about 1809, when he made Rome his residence. He read law with James Lynch; was admitted to the bar in 1816, and opened a law office in Rome. Mr. Lynch, who had acted as the agent for his father

in the leasing of lands and collection of rents in Rome, moved to Utica in 1818, and Mr. Roberts was appointed in his place, which delicate and responsible trust he held for fifty-three years, through the various titles and successive changes of ownership, of that landed property. The duties connected with that trust occupied the main portion of his time, so that he gave but very little attention to law business, nor did he ever become much known, either as a lawyer or as a politician. He was firm and decided in his political convictions, yet he always sympathized and most generally acted with the party that most strongly favored the temperance cause and anti-slavery movement, or had for its object the bettering of the condition and the elevation of the human race. In the strong democratic town of Rome, he was not infrequently elected to town offices, although he was always on the other side in politics. In 1840, he was appointed one of the Judges of the Oneida Common Pleas, and for five years held that office. For sixty years of his life he was a resident of Rome, and the oldest inhabitant can not, through the whole of that period, recall a single instance where he was seen to be angry, or manifested the least irritation of temper. He who possesses, or can maintain, such an equanimity for such a period of time, is entitled to a place in any history; the recent one of Oneida County not excepted. Without guile in his heart, and with malice toward none and charity for all, he had not while living an enemy in the world, and no one even uttered an unkind word concerning him. He died in October, 1870, in the eighty-first year of his age. Not long before his last illness, while I was in his office, he pointed out to me the little pine table at which he was then writing, and which was the only one he had used since his admission to the bar, fifty-four years before. Is it not almost enough of a relic to entitle it to place in the rooms of the Oneida Historical Society?

CHESTER HAYDEN.

Not far from 1812 Chester Hayden opened a law office in Rome. He married a sister of James Sherman. He was, for a time, law partner of Wheeler Barnes, and in 1818 was Town Clerk of Rome; ran for Assembly in this county in 1821, and was defeated, and same year he moved to Pulaski and was appointed Surrogate of Oswego County, and held that office for three years. In 1826 he returned to Rome, and was law partner of Henry A. Foster, for a few years thereafter. In 1830 he was appointed First Judge of the Oneida Common Pleas, and about that time moved to Utica, and he held that office until 1840. In 1843 he was appointed side Judge, and held that position for three years. About that time he moved to Albany, and in 1848 he published a legal work on "Practice and Pleadings" under the Code, that year brought into use for the first time. Subsequently he moved to Ohio, where he died a number of years ago, being at his death President and Professor of a law school in that State.

BENJAMIN P. JOHNSON.

Soon after the war of 1812 the father of Benjamin P. Johnson came from Columbia County to Rome, and located here. The father was a practicing physician. Benjamin P. had read law with Elisha Williams, that renowned jury lawyer, of Hudson, Columbia County, and was admitted to the bar in this county, in 1817. He was the first Clerk of Rome village, two years afterwards, and held for many years the office of Justice of the Peace, School Commissioner and other town offices—was Commissioner of Deeds, Master in Chancery, &c. In 1826 he was elected to the Assembly and again in 1827 and 1828. He never was prominent as a lawyer, although he had great versatility of talent, and was noted for the accuracy and quickness with which he dispatched business. It is said that he was able to listen to and carry on conversation with

several persons on different subjects, and at the same time draw a contract, or write a letter. In the great religious revival under Mr. Finney, in 1825 and 1826, Mr. Johnson was converted, and in February of the last named year, he united with the Presbyterian church, and about the time as did one hundred and eighty-four others on the same day. He was quite active and prominent in church matters, and not far from 1830 was licensed to preach by the Oneida Presbytery, and occupied the pulpit of the Second Church, in Rome, during the occasional absences of its pastor, and also preached at other places, for the then ensuing ten years. There are those yet living who heard Mr. Johnson preach, and who inform me his sermons were able, logical and to the point. It is not an unusual occurrence for persons to leave the ministry for the legal profession, nor for members of the bar to abandon the law and go into the ministry; but the instances are quite rare when a person occupies the pulpit and practices at the bar during the same period of time. It affords evidence that all lawyers are not as bad as they are painted, and that more of them should "practice what they preach."

In 1841 Mr. Johnson was made the first President of the Oneida County Agricultural Society, and for two or three years thereafter he was associated with Mr. Elon Comstock, in the publication of an agricultural paper at Rome. In 1847 he went to Albany and became Secretary and Treasurer of the State Agricultural Society, and held that position for twenty-two years. In 1851 he was delegate or commissioner from this State to the World's Fair, at London; and the information he there gathered, and the sights he there saw, offered him the opportunity to advance the sphere of usefulness of the Society of which he was Secretary. Mr. Johnson died in Albany, in April, 1869, at the age of seventy-six years. His remains are now in the Rome cemetery.

JOSEPH B. READ.

In the winter of 1819-20, Joseph B. Read, a schoolmate of Henry A. Foster, came to Rome and entered the law office of Seth B. Roberts, to complete his law studies. He had previously read law in Delphi, Onondaga County. For a number of years he was Justice of the Peace in Rome; was admitted in 1823, and about 1824-5 became a law partner of Mr. Foster. In 1831 he was Trustee of Rome village, and when George Brown, of Rome, in 1832, entered upon his duties as County Clerk, Mr. Read was made his first deputy. His health was then poor, and he far gone with consumption. That fall he started to go south to spend the winter for his health, but he died while on the boat going down the river from Albany to New York.

SAMUEL BEARDSLEY.

Prior to 1819, a young man, then of Otsego County, commenced the study of medicine in the office of the celebrated Dr. White, of Cherry Valley, with a view to becoming a practicing physician. He was about eighteen years of age, and with such an education as the common schools of the country then afforded. He supported himself by teaching district schools in winter, that he might, in summer, study for a profession. Having occasion to attend court at Cooperstown, he was so charmed with the trial of causes, and with legal proceedings in court, that he expressed to Joshua Hatheway, of Rome, who then chanced to be at court at Cooperstown, a notion and a desire to exchange the study of the medical, for that of the legal profession. He was encouraged so to do, and invited to become a student in Mr. Hatheway's office. The invitation was accepted, and Samuel Beardsley came to Rome; boarded in the family of Mr. Hatheway; read law; tended post office, and assisted in the Surrogate's Court, all in the same office, then on the site now occupied by "Elm Row" buildings. The

studies of Mr. Beardsley were again interrupted, not by peaceful pursuits, but by the stern realities of war. The northern frontier of New York was invaded by British troops, and in 1813 Mr. Beardsley went to Sacketts Harbor to assist in the defense of his country. On his return to Rome he completed his legal studies; was admitted to the bar in 1815; took up his residence in Watertown for a year; returned to Rome and opened a law office; married a daughter of Judge Hatheway, and was law partner of James Lynch for a short time. He was Town Clerk of Rome in 1817; Supervisor in 1818, 1819 and 1820. In 1821 he was appointed District Attorney in place of Nathan Williams—on the same day that his father-in-law was made Surrogate of the County. In 1822 Mr. Beardsley, Thomas Greenly, of Madison County, Sherman Wooster, of Herkimer, and Alvin Bronson, of Oswego, were elected Senators from this District, over George Huntington and his associates. This was the first election under the new Constitution of 1821, and it is a singular fact, and worthy of mention, that the democrats elected, that year, the whole thirty-two Senators in the State—a victory no party had won since the formation of the State Government. And it is also worth while to note, that of all of these Senators elected that year, the above named Alvin Bronson is the only one who survives. He is yet living at Oswego, having passed his ninety-seventh birthday.

Mr. Beardsley drew for the short term in the Senate, and served but one year. In 1823 he was appointed by President James Monroe, United States District Attorney for this District. Soon after his appointment as United States District Attorney in 1823, Mr. Beardsley moved from Rome to Utica. Many Romans yet remember the frame house that stood sixty years ago on the present site of the Tremont House, and of Mr. Beardsley's residence there, and of his office in the wing attached. In 1830 Mr. Beardsley was elected to Congress by sixteen hundred and forty-eight majority over S. N. Dexter who ran as the anti-Jackson and anti-masonic candidate.

Mr. Beardsley's majority in Rome, was one hundred and eighty-four. Fortune C. White ran as the workingman's candidate, and received three votes in Rome, and two hundred and forty-nine in the county. On his election to Congress he resigned the office of United States District Attorney. In 1832, he ran the second time for Congress, and was elected over Charles P. Kirkland, by about six hundred majority in the county. In January, 1834, Governor Marcy tendered to Mr. Beardsley the office of Circuit Judge for this judicial district; but as President Jackson needed his services and the democratic party his vote in Congress, he declined the proffered appointment, and Hiram Denio was appointed in the fall of that same year. Mr. Beardsley ran again for Congress, and was elected over Joshua A. Spencer. In 1836 he was appointed Attorney General, and in 1842, he was again elected to Congress over Charles P. Kirkland. In February, 1844, Governor Bouck appointed Mr. Beardsley Supreme Court Judge, and three years later he was made Chief Justice, and held that office until the constitution of 1846 went into effect. Mr. Beardsley was a democrat of the strictest sect, the *hardest* of the "hards" in the time of that party. I was present in the Cincinnati Convention of 1856, twenty-three years ago the coming June, when James Buchanan was nominated for the Presidency, and when Mr. Beardsley headed that half part of the New York delegation called "hunkers;" and when he arose and announced that "the National democracy of New York cast seventeen votes for James Buchanan for President," there was a seeming relish to him, in the way he said "National," and announced that result in the face of the "soft" portion of that delegation. Mr. Beardsley was one of the very few who could and did take an active part in politics, for over thirty years of an unusually busy life and yet stood on a level at the bar and on the bench with the ablest lawyers in the land, and head and shoulders above a large majority of his fellows. On his retiring from judicial duties, for it can hardly be said he ever retired from taking a great interest in politics, he opened a law office in New York City for a while, devoting himself wholly to counsel business, retaining however his

residence in Utica. He died in the latter city, May 6, 1860, the very day he had attained the age of seventy years and three months.

DANIEL WARDWELL.

In 1812, when Samuel Beardsley was reading law in the office of Mr. Hatheway, tending post office and boarding in the family of of his then future father-in-law, he had for a fellow boarder and student a young man a couple of months younger than himself, who had graduated the year before from Brown University in Rhode Island, and that year came with his father's family to Rome and settled at the "Ridge." That fellow student and boarder was Daniel Wardwell, who the next year went into the office of Gold & Sill of Whitesboro, and was admitted to the Jefferson Common Pleas in 1814 while for a brief time a resident of that county. He married a daughter of Newton Mann, lived and practiced law in Rome in 1816 and 1817, his office being a small frame building near where the *Sentinel* office now is. In 1820 he lived in Utica, and soon after moved to Jefferson County; and 1824 was appointed by Governor Yates, side Judge of that county. It was in his office in 1821 at Adams, that Rev. Charles G. Finney, who afterward became the noted revivalist, was reading law at the time of his conversion, and thereupon abandoned the law for the ministry. Mr. Wardwell was elected member of Assembly from Jefferson County 1825, 1826 and 1827. In 1826 he was the means of causing great commotion at Albany, New York and the river counties, by his introduction into the Assembly and advocacy of a resolution favoring the removal of the State Capital to Utica or some other central point. The project took like wild fire in the central and western part of the State, and public meetings were held at Utica, presided over and taken part in by its leading and prominent citizens in favor of the proposition. I regret to add, the measure failed, and it does not look now as if it would be carried for the next fifty years. In 1828, in the exciting Presidential

contest between Jackson and Adams, Mr. Wardwell ran for State Senator in this district, on the Jackson ticket. His opponent was William H. Maynard of Utica. Masonry or anti-masonry was then one of the exciting topics of the canvass. The election was close, but Mr. Maynard was elected by about three hundred majority. In return for this defeat, the Jefferson county district elected Mr. Wardwell to Congress for three successive terms, the first time in 1830, and which was for a longer time than any other person has been elected from that county. It is worth while to note that he was elected for the same three terms and in the same years, as was his fellow law student Mr. Beardsley from this county, and that both were warm personal and political friends, and were among the most determined adherents and supporters of President Jackson all through the stormy period of his administration. Daniel Wardwell and Samuel Beardsley were for so many years in such close contact and fellowship with President Jackson, it has often seemed to me as if they had much of the unyielding purpose, unbending integrity and Roman firmness of that fearless statesman. In the last year of Mr. Wardwell's life, after his mind had passed into the penumbra of that eclipse from which it never fully emerged, while his conversation wandered on all other subjects, a recurrence to or calling up of the stormy times when he was in Congress, seemed to remove the clouds from his mental vision, to bring light and flash to his eye, determination in his look, as if those scenes were again passing in review before him, and as if ready to exclaim like Bonaparte in his wild delirium at St. Helena, "the head of the army!" Mr. Wardwell was elected to the Assembly for the fourth time in 1837 from Jefferson county. He became a resident of Rome again in 1860, and died here in March, 1878, lacking but a month of his eighty-seventh birthday.

HIRAM DENIO.

Some may say that those only should be called Romans, who were born in Rome. To satisfy such, I point out Hiram Denio. He was born in Wright Settlement, obtained all of his education in town except what he received at Fairfield Academy; read law at first with Wheeler Barnes, and afterwards with Storrs & White of Whitesboro; was admitted to the bar in 1821; opened a law office in Rome; was appointed in 1825 District Attorney of the county, to succeed Samuel Beardsley, and about that time moved to Utica. In 1834, he was appointed Circuit Judge, and after four years was compelled to resign by reason of ill health; held the office of Bank Commissioner from 1838 to 1841; was Clerk of the old Supreme Court from about 1840 to 1845; was Supreme Court Reporter from 1845 to 1847, as the five volumes of Denio's Reports attest; in June, 1853, he was appointed by Governor Seymour to fill a vacancy in the Court of Appeals, and in the fall of that year was elected over Judge Mullin; when his term run out, fourteen years later, he was re-nominated. I was in the Democrat State convention eleven years ago last fall at Syracuse, when Mayor Fernando Wood, a delegate, tried to defeat the re-nomination of Judge Denio, because the latter had rendered an adverse decision in the Courts of Appeals on matters in New York City in which Mayor Wood was interested. He made a very ingenious and plausible argument against such re-nomination, and would have succeeded in defeating it, but for the eloquent and powerful speech of Governor Seymour, also a delegate. Governor Seymour's effort on that occasion was among the ablest and happiest of his life. Judge Denio was nominated and was elected over Timothy Jenkins.

It is a little singular, that as decided a democrat as Judge Denio was, and as intimate as he, Judge Beardsley, Judge Foster, Greene C. Bronson and other democrats were in politics, he

never attended conventions, nor mixed in politics like them, nor seemed to aspire to political offices.

That he was a lawyer and judge however second to none in the State, all concede. He died in Utica, in November, 1871, at the age of seventy-three.

REV. ALBERT BARNES.

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There is another who was born in Rome, and although not coming within the line of these sketches, for he was neither a lawyer nor a politician, yet as he has arisen to greater note and prominence in the world than any who have been mentioned, he can not be passed by. Albert Barnes was born in Wright Settlement. He was of about the same age of Hiram Denio—they were play-mates in boyhood, companions in youth, and friends through life. They attended together the Fairfield Academy, and both were designed for the law. The conversion of Albert Barnes while attending Hamilton College, changed the whole current of his thoughts and the bent of his pursuits in another direction. He studied for and was admitted into the ministry, and in that sphere of usefulness, rose to greater eminence than he could ever have hoped to attain in any other. For thirty-seven years he was pastor of the same church. His notes of the Gospels, translated into various languages on the continent of Europe, and reaching a sale of over one million of volumes, have made the name of Albert Barnes familiar to millions of Christian households in both hemispheres, and the memory of his good work will be revered so long as the Bible is taught in our Sabbath schools, or piety shall be revered upon earth.

JOHN B. JERVIS.

There is another Roman, although neither a lawyer nor a politician, who by the strict rules would be shut out of this paper, yet it would hardly be complete without him. John B. Jervis

came with his parents to Rome, from Long Island, in the same year Oneida County was formed. In 1817, when the construction of the Erie Canal commenced, Benjamin Wright, the engineer, was in need of an axman, and young Jervis was temporarily engaged. He was ready with an ax and apt in learning, and soon after he was promoted to the position of rodman in the survey, for twelve dollars per month. He then turned his attention to the study and practice of surveying and engineering, and made such proficiency under Mr. Wright that in two years he was made resident engineer, at one dollar and a quarter a day, on seventeen miles of the canal, extending from Madison into Onondaga County. After remaining there two years he was made resident engineer for two years more, on a more difficult and important division near Amsterdam. In 1823 he was made superintendent of the work for fifty miles of the canal, employing and discharging all the subordinates. When the canal was completed in 1825, having been seven years on that work, he resigned to engage in higher duties, and he received from Henry Seymour, Canal Commissioner and the father of Governor Seymour, a kind and very commendatory letter. He received from Benjamin Wright, then chief engineer of the Delaware and Hudson Canal, the appointment of assistant engineer, and upon Mr. Jervis devolved the main duties. He examined the route, and on his recommendation the use of the river, for part of the way, as was first intended, was abandoned. He was engaged as engineer on a great many other works of internal improvement, among which may be mentioned the railroad between Albany and Schenectady, the Schenectady and Saratoga Railroad, the Chenango Canal, the eastern division of the Erie Canal on its enlargement in 1836, the Croton Water Works, supplying New York City with water, and which was considered the greatest piece of engineering skill in the world, and the success of which gave Mr. Jervis a world wide reputation. He was consulting engineer to supply Boston with water, and chief engineer of the Hudson River Railroad, &c., &c. The water works of Port Jervis (a place on the Erie Railroad named after him) were con-

structed under his approval, and the water works of Rome were not undertaken until the plan had been subjected to the scrutiny of his engineering skill, and received the approval of his judgment.

In 1816 he united with the first and then the only church in Rome, and under its first installed pastor, and for over sixty-two years, he has been an honored member of a church. I think I am safe in saying there is no one who can show so long a membership, and that there is no living person whose coming to Rome antedates his, or who has made Rome for so many years a permanent residence. A few weeks ago he reached his eighty-third birthday; and those who heard or have read his lecture on "Industrial Economy," prepared a few weeks before he was eighty-three years old, need not be told that the mind and memory of John B. Jervis are as clear, fresh and vigorous as when in the full flush of his early manhood.

HENRY A. FOSTER.

In November, 1819, a young man, but a few months past nineteen years of age, came from the office of Beach & Popple, attorneys and counsellors at Oswego, to Rome, and entered the law office of James Sherman, to complete his law studies. At that time, to be an attorney and counsellor of the Supreme Court required a previous course of study of seven years. Two and a half years of that time had been passed by that student, commencing in 1815, in the law office at Cazenovia, of David B. Johnson, father of D. M. K. Johnson, of Rome. In 1818 he read law at Onondaga Hill, then the county seat of Onondaga County, in the office of B. Davis Noxon, who subsequently became an eminent lawyer in Central New York, and was father of Judge Noxon, of Syracuse.

When Henry A. Foster entered the law office of James Sherman, as above stated, the Erie Canal between Rome and Utica

was but just completed and brought into use. What is now the city of Syracuse was then unknown, being only a small collection of houses, and known by the name of "*Corinth*." The county of Oswego was formed but three years before, and what is now the city of Oswego was, at the time Mr. Foster read law there, an unincorporated village of about four hundred inhabitants. Rome was about the same size, and had been incorporated in the spring before Mr. Foster came to Rome. There were at that time six lawyers in Rome, viz.: Joshua Hatheway, Wheeler Barnes, James Sherman, Samuel Beardsley, S. B. Roberts and B. P. Johnson. Mr. Hatheway devoted most of his time to official duties, Mr. Roberts had charge of the Lynch estate, and Mr. Johnson had been admitted only a couple of years.

In those days the oldest as well as the foremost members of the bar practiced in Justice's Court whenever an opportunity offered, and tried causes therein with as much zeal and tenacity as in Courts of Record. For a law student to obtain a livelihood, when he had to compete in those courts with experienced and influential practitioners, it was requisite he should be one of more than ordinary pluck, industry and intelligence. It was only for a few years previous that anybody could practice in Justices' Courts, for, as the law stood prior to 1812, Justices of the Peace were prohibited by positive law from allowing any one to appear in their courts as an advocate, or to try causes, except in cases of the sickness of the suitor. But in April, 1812, that law was repealed, and the preamble to the repealing clause reads so quaintly yet so truthfully, and withal sounds so oddly at the present day, that I have been tempted to copy it. It reads: "*Whereas it often happens that suitors are wanting in ability to do justice to their own causes, or are deserted by that presence of mind which is the requisite to command or bring into use such abilities as they may actually possess; and whereas it is a constitutional right which every person has, to employ assistance in all lawful business, therefore the above section is repealed.*" It is an acknowledgment of an old saying, that he

who tries his own cause has a fool for a client. What would the young lawyers of the present day do, if the above repealing clause of 1812 had never been enacted?

I have it from the lips of Numa Leonard, an early settler in Rome, and one of the Justices of the Peace fifty and more years ago, and I have also learned it from other old residents, since passed away, that it was well understood whenever Mr. Foster was in a law case, even when a law student, that in the vernacular of the present day, "it meant business." In 1822 he was admitted to the bar, and within three hours after his admission to the Common Pleas, he was assigned by the Court to defend a person who was indicted for petit larceny, second offense, the offense having been committed before the first conviction. In looking through the judicial records in Oneida County Clerk's office not long since, for materials for this paper, I came across a record of that trial, which took place that year at the General Sessions, before Judges Joshua Hatheway, Truman Enos and Samuel Jones. Samuel Beardsley was District Attorney. As the law now is, a person convicted for the first time of petit larceny, is liable to imprisonment only, in the county jail, and if convicted of a similar offense, after the first conviction, then the punishment is by imprisonment in the State prison.

The statute as it then read provided for the punishment, by imprisonment in the State Prison, "of every person who should be a second time, or oftener, convicted of petit larceny," without saying (as the law now does) that the second offense must be committed, *after a conviction* for a former theft. The objection was taken by Mr. Foster, that this could not be a State Prison offense, as the indictment did not allege nor the proofs show, that the offense was committed after a previous conviction; but that in fact, the *conviction* was for the second offense; that the intent and spirit of the statute were to work a reformation of the offender, by increasing the punishment, for offences committed after

a conviction; but if this was a State Prison offense, then the punishment was the greater for the *first* offense. The District Attorney relied upon the literal reading of the statute, and for two hours the respective counsel argued that question of law to the court. Two of the judges held with the District Attorney, and the other one with Mr. Foster, and so the case had to go to the jury. As jurors in those days were popularly considered judges of the law as well as of the fact in criminal trials, the prisoner's counsel summed up to the jury on that theory and on that question of law, and for two hours the counsel on both sides argued to the jury as to the construction which should be given to that statute, without either side hardly touching upon the merits of the case, as to the guilt or innocence of the accused. The jury took the law of the case into their own hands, construed the statute differently from the two judges, and on that question of law *acquitted the prisoner!* With such a "send off" at the commencement of a professional career and when but twenty-two years old, it can hardly be supposed Mr. Foster ever lacked for clients. A few years later, the same question came up again in this county, and was carried to the Supreme Court, and that court, (3d Cow. Rep., 347.) gave the construction to the law contended for by Mr. Foster, and then the Legislature changed the statute, to make it conformable to that decision.

It was difficult in those days, if not impossible, for a person to remain neutral in, or for one of ambition and ability to keep out of politics during the exciting times growing out of the discussion relative to the convention and constitution of 1821, the elective franchise, the Presidential campaign between General Jackson and John Quincy Adams in 1824, and the still more exciting one of 1828. Mr. Foster, like Samuel Beardsley, Greene C. Bronson, Samuel A. Talcott, William H. Maynard, Henry R. Storrs, Joseph Kirkland, Ezekiel Bacon, Joshua A. Spencer, Timothy Jenkins, and other legal luminaries, drifted into politics, and at an early age all of the above took as active a part in caucuses and conven-

tions as in the trial of causes at the Circuit. In 1826, in the gubernatorial contest between DeWitt Clinton and William B. Rochester, Mr. Foster was nominated for Assembly on the Rochester ticket; but the Clintonians and federalists were too strong in the county, and the Rochester Assembly ticket was defeated. In 1827 Mr. Foster made a bold push for the office of Surrogate, then held by Mr. Hatheway. It was a hazardous attempt for a young man, not then twenty-seven years of age, to try for the displacement of one who had been in political life as long as Mr. Hatheway, and who knew so well all the ins and outs of politics; and moreover, who had to back him his son-in-law, Mr. Samuel Beardsley, then an important factor in the politics of the county and State. The attempt seemed like demanding the crown from the reigning King, or the scepter from the Pope. Nevertheless, the effort was made. In March, 1827, Mr. Foster was appointed Mr. Hatheway's successor, Surrogate of Oneida County, by Governor DeWitt Clinton, which office he held until 1831. In 1830 he was elected State Senator, over Nehemiah Huntington, an old lawyer of Madison County. Mr. Foster's majority in Oneida County was fourteen hundred. Ephraim Hart, of Utica, ran on the workingmen's party, and received *one* vote in Rome, and four hundred and seventy-five votes in the county. So it seems that the party of last year by that name was not a new one, but that fifty years ago an organized workingmen's party was in existence, seeking at the polls a redress for political grievances. History repeats itself, sometimes in fifty years, and many times oftener.

Mr. Foster was Trustee of Rome village in 1826, 1827 and 1828, and Supervisor of the town in 1829 and 1830, and again in 1833 and 1834. In January, 1835, he was again appointed Surrogate of Oneida County, to succeed Allanson Bennett, and held the position until he resigned in August, 1837, as he was then soon to commence his Congressional labors at Washington. In 1836, he was elected to Congress, over Joshua A. Spencer, although Israel Stoddard

ran as the "bolters" candidate, and carried off twelve hundred votes. It was the year Martin Van Buren was elected President of the United States. In the Harrison campaign of 1840, Ex-Governor Seymour and Ward Hunt were competitors for the nomination for the State Senate. As the Senatorial convention was about evenly divided between those two candidates, they finally compromised on the nomination of Mr. Foster, who was elected over Chester Buck of Lewis County. While in the Senate during this term, Mr. Foster introduced a resolution, and to him belongs the honor of procuring its passage through both Houses of the Legislature, favoring the modification of the franking privilege, and a reduction of the rate of postage (the cost of sending a single letter through the mails, then being from eighteen to twenty-five cents.) That was the first legislative action taken on that subject, and although it took the general government a long time to give heed to that request from the Empire State, yet it was eventually done, and Mr. Foster has lived to see that reform, initiated by him and so much needed by the people, become the law of the land. Near the close of his term he resigned, to accept the appointment of United States Senator, to fill a vacancy.

Hammond's Political History, in referring to the Senate of 1844, uses the following language: "Had we arranged the members of the Senate of 1844 according to their reputation for talents, Mr. Foster ought undoubtedly to have headed the list. In debate he is truly formidable. The rapid and effective action of his intellectual powers, his retentive memory, his ready recollection of facts and even dates, combined with his sharp and caustic style of speaking, made him respected and feared by his opponents, and the admired champion of his friends."

In April, 1853, President Franklin Pierce appointed Mr. Foster to the office of United States District Attorney for the northern district of New York. The appointment was entirely unsolicited and unexpected; the first knowledge or intimation Mr. Foster

had of such intended appointment, was from the newspapers. He felt compelled to decline the proffered honor, and Samuel B. Garvin, then of Utica, was subsequently appointed.

In 1863 he was elected Judge of the Supreme Court from this Judicial District, for a term of eight years. Such then is a synopsis of the political and judicial life of Judge Foster, in addition to as large and important a law business as any other lawyer in Central New York, viz.: six and one-half years Surrogate; two years in Congress; eight years in the State Senate; and eight years on the bench of the Supreme Court—all of which positions he adorned, and discharged their various duties with an ability, fidelity and faithfulness that were never questioned. He now lacks but a few months of his seventy-ninth birthday, and with a mind unimpaired by increasing years, a memory unaffected by the accumulation and cares of an extensive law business, a vigor of intellect that seems to have suffered no diminution by use or age, and with an activity that is but very little lessened by the burdens of an unusually active and busy life. Rome is honored by the residence of such a one who has been a "Roman Citizen" for nearly one-half a century, and has made a decided impress upon the times in which he has lived. I think I am safe in saying that no one is now living in this State, and that the personal knowledge of those who now hear me does not extend to any other person who has attained such an age, with such mental vigor, and capable of such physical endurance. With the exception of Alvin Bronson above named he is the oldest Ex-Senator in the State. And in running my eye over the names of the forty-two Congressmen from this State at the time Judge Foster was a member of that body, I find only three besides himself now alive, viz.: Judge Amasa J. Parker, of Albany; Arphaxad Loomis, of Little Falls; Judge Hiram Gray, of Elmira.

The present generation must not be unmindful that the political work and the political workers of to-day, are not by any means

like those of the times of which I have been speaking. Those were the days of arduous political toil, of sleepless vigilance, and of untiring activity. Those were the times when the foremost members of the bar, and the most prominent men in county and State were in attendance at town caucuses, and delegates to district, county and State conventions, and among the hardest and most faithful workers at the election polls; when the note of preparation, on the eve of an election, like that on the eve of battle, sounded all along the lines, and no vigilance was relaxed, no work left undone until the last vote was in the ballot box. No one was idle, none slept at his post. Let me narrate an incident or two as to the way the warfare was waged and politicians worked forty, fifty and sixty years ago.

Those who knew Wheeler Barnes will remember that for the last thirty years of his life he was lame, and walked with difficulty, even with a cane. He was an active partisan in his day, and particularly hostile and bitter in his opposition to General Jackson for the Presidency in 1828, as were all of the Adams men of that period. That was the year of the "coffin hand bills," distributed by the Adams men in every school district, and with wonderful effect against General Jackson. At the head of each hand bill were the pictures of six black looking coffins, and underneath was printed the story of the six militia men ordered by General Jackson to be shot for desertion, and who were executed in 1815. The story was told with pathetic tenderness, and with the amplification and exaggeration usually attending electioneering documents. A few days before that election, Mr. Barnes started out from Rome on horseback, with a large roll of those hand bills, to distribute in Vienna, Camden and adjoining towns. A democratic politician of Rome in those times, and who is yet a Roman,* seeing Mr. Barnes start out, suspected the purport of his mission, followed on soon after with an antidote for that poison. A short distance west of the United States Arsenal, Mr. Barnes' horse was discovered by the Jackson man riderless by the roadside, and on inquiry

* Ex-Judge Foster.

he learned that Mr. Barnes was in a neighboring house, having fallen or been thrown from his saddle, breaking his leg near the hip joint. The illness consequent thereon lasted him for months, and he was made a cripple for the rest of his life. Of course the Jackson men chose to construe that misfortune as a visitation upon Mr. Barnes for his activity and bitterness in that canvass.

Four years later, and when General Jackson ran the next time for the Presidency, a misfortune befel the Jackson party, and had it resulted as was at first feared, would have given the Jackson men more annoyance and pain than the breaking of a dozen legs. The Democratic County Convention was held that year (1832) at Floyd, and Squire Utley, of Western, David Wager, of Utica, John Dewey, of Boonville, and Othniel Williams (father of Hon. O. S. Williams) of Clinton, were nominated for the Assembly. It was in the time of three days' election, the first day commencing Monday, November 5th. Railroads and telegraph wires had not then penetrated Oncida County. On Sunday, November 4th, at six o'clock in the evening, Mr. Williams, one of the above nominees, died suddenly at his home in Clinton! What was to be done, election commencing at nine o'clock the next morning? A new set of Assembly tickets was at once printed, with the name of Levi Buckingham, of Marshall, in place of Mr. Williams, and a printed circular signed by the county corresponding committee, announcing the death, accompanied the ballots. About midnight that night a special messenger reached Rome with the news of the death, and with the votes for all of the northern towns. Thomas Dugan, then an active democrat, was at once started with the tickets for the towns of Floyd, Steuben, Remsen, Trenton and Boonville. Judge Foster started about one A. M. on horseback, with the tickets of Western, Lee, Annsville, Camden, Florence and Vienna, and left them in the hands of trusty persons, and was back by nine o'clock Monday morning at the polls in the "Fish Creek district" in Rome, where the first day's election was held, ready for a three days' battle for General Jackson and the democratic cause. The whole county was supplied with the tickets, and

only twelve votes were lost (in the town of Augusta) by reason of the above disaster. The whole democratic ticket was elected that year in county, State and Nation. Such was the way politicians did their work in those days, and of such materials were they composed.

I am not unmindful of such Romans as Allanson Bennett, Charles Tracy, Norman B. Judd, William C. Noyes, Calvin B. Gay, Calvert Comstock and others, but as they were not prominent actors for the first forty years of Rome's history, they go into another and later chapter.

JOHN STRYKER.

There is yet one more Roman who should go into this "record" before this chapter closes, for he has been a resident for almost one-half a century, and none in the State has been more active in politics than he. Mr. John Stryker read law with Storrs & White, came to Rome before he was twenty-one to form a law partnership with Allanson Bennett, was admitted to the bar as soon as he had attained his majority, and at once glided into politics by a process so easy and natural, that it was almost second nature to him, and yet he had a large law practice, in connection with his subsequent law partners, Henry A. Foster, Charles Tracy and Calvert Comstock. No person probably in the State, and certainly none in the county was so fond of politics as he or made it such an exclusive study and business for over forty years of his life. He was elected to the Assembly in 1835, held the office of Surrogate for ten years from 1837, and those were about the only offices he ever held; and yet he has attended more caucuses, district, county, State and National conventions, made and unmade office-holders, and managed and manipulated conventions to a greater extent than any other man in the State. A few weeks ago he reached his seventieth birthday, and yet his memory as to facts, dates and details of fifty years gone by is not equaled by that of any living person. The politics of Oneida County and the history of

State and National conventions would be in a great measure shorn of their most interesting features, if all that Hon. John Stryker had to do therewith was left out.

I have spoken of Mr. Stryker more as a politician, he having been a delegate to twelve State Conventions of the democratic party, a delegate to four National conventions, and for ten years a leading member on the State committee. During a long period of his political life he was in confidential correspondence with such eminent men as Governor Marey, General Lewis Cass, Governor Bouck, Governor Manning, of South Carolina, John L. Dawson, of Pennsylvania, Edwin Croswell, &c., &c., and a life-long and devoted friend and admirer of Governor Seymour. The letters above referred to, if preserved, would make an interesting history of the times, and an important chapter of the movements of the democratic party. To him and Judge Foster is Rome indebted for its prosperity in securing the Black River Canal and the Syracuse and Utica Railroad, against active adverse interests, and the change of the Erie Canal from the Rome Swamp to the center of the city—from which time Rome has continued to increase in prosperity, on a sound basis, and which have been the means of adding five-fold to her population.

Lengthy as this paper is, it contains not a tithe of what could be written concerning the important events and prominent men in Rome for the first forty years of its history—men who have exerted as great an influence in the history of the county, State and nation as any who have lived in the Valley of the Mohawk since the days of the Revolution.

It is well for the present generation to have occasionally unfolded to their view a panorama of the past, as it will better enable them to understand and appreciate its history, and to more fully realize the nature, character and beneficence of those political institutions which are destined to live and flourish long after the memory of the actors in those scenes shall have faded away, like streaks of morning cloud, into the infinite azure of the past.

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OF THE
ONEIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT UTICA
No. 5

Second Annual Address

BEFORE THE SOCIETY

BY

WILLIAM TRACY

OF NEW YORK

January 13th 1880

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THE ONEIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

1880

At the Annual Meeting of the Oneida Historical Society at Utica, held in the rooms of the Society, Tuesday, January 13, 1880, the annual reports of the officers were presented, and placed on file.

The Treasurer, Robert S. Williams, reported as follows :

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|-------|----|
| Balance on hand at date of last report, | - | - | - | \$139 | 46 |
| Amount received from all sources, 1879, | - | - | - | 141 | 45 |
| Amount expended, 1879, | - | - | - | 161 | 54 |
| Balance on hand, | - | - | - | 119 | 37 |
| No. members who paid dues, 1879, | - | - | - | 55 | |
| No. members whose dues are unpaid, | - | - | - | 78 | |

The report of the Librarian, Morven M. Jones, showed the following increase in the collections of the Society :

| | 1879 | 1880 | Increase |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|----------|
| Bound Books, | 512 | 829 | 317 |
| Pamphlets, | 346 | 644 | 298 |
| Newspapers and Periodicals, | 222 | 268 | 46 |
| Manuscripts, Documents, Maps, | 227 | 296 | 69 |
| Relics and Works of Art, | 67 | 83 | 16 |
| | 1,374 | 2,120 | 746 |

The annual election of officers followed, and the tellers declared the result as follows :

President,

HORATIO SEYMOUR.

Vice Presidents,

CHARLES W. HUTCHINSON, ALEXANDER SEWARD,
EDWARD HUNTINGTON.

Recording Secretary,

S. N. DEXTER NORTH.

Corresponding Secretary and Librarian,

MORVEN M. JONES.

Treasurer,

ROBERT S. WILLIAMS.

Executive Committee,

JOHN F. SEYMOUR,

JOHN L. EARLL,

S. G. VISSCHER,

DANIEL BATCHELOR,

RICHARD U. SHERMAN.

The society took a recess until evening, when it assembled in Library Hall, the President, Horatio Seymour, in the chair, and the annual address was delivered by William Tracy, of New York.

At the conclusion of the address, on motion of Hon. William J. Bacon, it was unanimously

Resolved, That the hearty thanks of the Oneida Historical Society are tendered to William Tracy, of New York, for his valuable and entertaining address upon the early history of Oneida County, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

Mr. President, Gentlemen and Ladies :

Forty-two years ago I had the honor of addressing the Young Men's Association of this city upon Men and Events connected with the early history of Oneida County. The years which have passed since then have been pregnant with striking events in the history of the world. This city, then containing a population of some ten thousand souls, has become the abode of nearly or quite four times the number. Should we go outside of it, and look at the changes in our own country, they will furnish us striking lessons in the manner that Providence works out the great problems of civilization. A war growing out of the annexation of Texas, intended by the promoters of the measure to enlarge the area of slavery, added to our boundaries territory sufficient to constitute an empire; another instituted to perpetuate the institution and extend its area over the whole land, resulted in blotting it out from the nation, and rendering every foot of its dominion land of the free. Although this cost us thousands of millions of treasure, and the blood of a million of our sons, yet the terrible price has not been thrown away, and we can rejoice that we have stamped out the sore spot which for years had given the lie to the Declaration of Independence. Our commerce, agriculture and the arts have increased, so that instead of a dependence upon the productions of other countries, we are now furnishing from our fields and workshops the supply of the necessities of life, not only for ourselves, but also for other nations, for which they are paying us by hundreds of millions of the precious metals.

The map of the United States has been enlarged by the

organization of states covering more territory than the original thirteen colonies possessed, and filling it with people full of enterprise and energy, employed in advancing the general welfare.

As we turn to the other portions of the world, we see that in Europe the progress of political revolution has accomplished changes more striking than those of any century of the past. France, up to the revolution of the last century and the establishment of imperial government, succeeded by the restoration of her ancient dynasty, has given way successively to the government of the son of the most radical of the republicans of the reign of terror, to be hurled from the throne to give way to a second republic, again to be replaced by a second empire, and that followed by a third republic.

The small states of Italy and of the Church have been united under a constitutional monarchy. Peoples under its influence, emancipated from intellectual slavery, are making rapid strides in civilization under the wise sway of the son of the sovereign who acquired from his people the appellation of "Il Re Galantuomo," the honest king.

Revolution has also performed its work in Spain. The land of romance, of Ferdinand and Isabella, of Charles V. and his bigoted and cruel son—where reprobate monarchs had for ages withstood the march of civilization—has been seen under republican rule, and now presents the appearance of a well regulated united monarchy, giving promise of a stable, well ordered state.

Most of the States which had divided the German-speaking people have become consolidated into an empire

under the leadership of Prussia. Russia has emancipated her millions of serfs from a slavery as averse to human progress as the negro slavery which was once the reproach of our own land.

On the Central and South American portions of our continent the march of political improvement, though marked with revolutions and frequently with misrule, has, nevertheless, made progress. Mexico having successfully resisted an attempt from without to overthrow her republican institutions and impose upon her a foreign monarchy, has introduced reforms in the administration of her affairs, and affords ground for hope that she may soon become a well established state. The other Spanish-speaking republics are beginning to move forward in the improvement of their political condition and the welfare of their people. Brazil, the only nation still under royal sway upon this side of the Atlantic, has come under the mild government of a paternal sovereign, earnestly engaged in studying the marks of progress in other nations, and in developing the resources of his own empire and promoting the happiness of his people.

Turning our eyes away from these glimpses of the march of light, in our own continent and Europe, towards the ancient seats of civilization, their recent history is quite as striking, and their outlook for the future as hopeful. China and Japan, for ages sealed against human progress, have been opened to the rest of the world, and they are persistently and rapidly introducing the arts and amenities of western civilization. Geographical discovery has opened up the Dark land to us. The Niger and the Nile and the

Congo have given up their secrets, and the problem of Africa's call to life has deeply interested the philosophical and scientific world. This has all been done within the memory of a large portion of this audience.

It is not alone that the changes referred to have taken place among the nations,—the triumphs of invention and discovery in the arts and sciences, in amelioration of the condition of the human family, have been quite as signal within our age. Never before have they made such great strides. The inventor and the improvers of the steam engine never dreamed of the conquests we witness all around us, and of those of its dependencies. No one, half a century since, dreamed of seeing the oceans vexed with iron ships ten times the size of any vessels then known, and passing, thousands of miles, from country to country with the regularity of a ferry-boat.

The galvanic telegraph, with its conquests, transmitting messages over every land and under every sea, has brought the whole race of civilized man into instant communication, and become the ready servant of diplomacy and commerce and friendship. The cabinet minister now sits in his bureau and communicates his despatches to the antipodes and receives immediate answers. The merchant in New York or London converses with his correspondents at Japan or Australia, and a musician can sing a song or play a familiar tune to be heard and awaken the recollection of his friends across ocean and continents.

The railroad forty years ago had just started on its wonderful career. Its thousand miles have multiplied themselves a thousand fold in our country, and many a thousand

fold in other lands. It has crossed the mountain chains of the four quarters of the globe, and the Alps, the Andes, the Rocky Mountains, and the Himalayas are witnesses to its exploits in changing the whole means of intercourse between nations.

The improvements and increase of machinery to relieve human toil have multiplied beyond all former expectations. Without attempting to enumerate the wonders to which they have given birth, I simply name a single invention, unknown forty years ago, which has become a necessity in various workshops, as well as at the fireside of the homestead in many lands, the sewing machine, of which three-quarters of a million are made and sold in this country every year.

It is not my purpose to attempt an examination of these topics. The time allowed to me for a lecture would be insufficient for even a brief notice of a tithe of them. I have alluded to them simply as showing the progress of the world within the period that the history of Oneida County has been urged on from the time the first emigrant struck his axe into the unbroken forest up to the present, when it has become the abode of a high degree of civilization.

Within the last forty years, the earlier history of Oneida County has been examined and illustrated by the pens of several of your distinguished fellow citizens. When I read here "Notice of men and events connected with the early history of Oneida County," I think no one had attempted any written contributions to it. Since then quite a number of your citizens have supplemented what I then attempted. My friend Judge Pomeroy Jones has given full and valuable

annals of each of its towns with notices of their settlers. Judge Othniel S. Williams has collected the traditions of the settlement of Kirkland. Mr. John F. Seymour has made a very interesting addition to your history in his address at Trenton. David E. Wager, Esquire has written valuable and interesting notices of Rome. Doctor M. M. Bagg, an exhaustive work upon the history of this city, and my early and valued friend Judge William J. Bacon in his address on the members of the bar of this county, has left little to be added to the subject. You would not thank me for a fresh recital of their historical sketches. I shall not, therefore, attempt a review of the history of Oneida County, but will confine myself to a comparative view of what she was in her early stages while the hand of improvement was attacking her forests, to convert them into farms and the homes of civilized life, and what she has become under the plastic hand of the emigrants and their sons and daughters, with incidental anecdotes of a few of its inhabitants.

In 1785 the region now covered with beautiful farms and villages and the two manufacturing and commercial cities Utica and Rome, now constituting this county, was a wilderness. The only land which had been denuded of its forest consisted of two small Indian clearings at Oriskany and Oneida castle. An Indian village occupied the left bank of the Oriskany creek just eastward of the site of the woolen factory which was built as early as 1810. Another Indian village at Oneida castle was the principal home of the tribe which gave to it its name. During the year first mentioned the late Judge Hugh White, with a family consisting of several sons and daughters emigrated

from Middletown, Connecticut, and established himself in the present village of Whitesboro, building a log house on the southern extremity of the village green. His settlement gave the name of Whitestown and of the Whitestown Country to the lands lying westward of the German flats and northward to the boundaries of the State. He was soon followed by numbers of emigrants chiefly from Connecticut and Massachusetts, though there were some from the other settlements of this State, and some from New Jersey. Many of them had been soldiers in the Revolutionary army. Thirty-six years after this period it became necessary for pensioners under the Act of Congress of 1818 to appear before the county courts and make depositions as to their services. In Oneida County the court appointed a day to hear their applications. There then appeared a few less than two hundred of these veterans. After having made their depositions they formed into line, and led by a Revolutionary drummer marched through the streets and around the village green. As the youngest Revolutionary soldier must then have been about fifty years old it is probable that an equal number of those who had settled in Oneida County had within the thirty-six years after the war died, and that there may have been four or five hundred soldiers who had emigrated to Oneida County, or a sufficient number to constitute a battalion. I will here remark that among the officers of the army who became inhabitants of the county, were General Frederick William Augustus, Baron Steuben, who died at his residence in Steuben, in 1794, General William Floyd, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Colonel Benjamin Walker who had been aid to Washington and subsequently to

Baron Steuben. He became an inhabitant of Utica and died here ; and Colonel Garret G. Lansing of Oriskany. The latter once told me the story of his becoming a soldier. His father resided in Albany. A week before Garret became sixteen years old, the age required for military service, he overheard his mother tell his father that Garry would become of age for being enrolled during the next week, and it would be prudent to say nothing of it. The boy was determined to become a soldier and no sooner had he heard the news that he might be a subject of enrollment than he went to the enrolling officer and told him his age. He was enrolled and the next week started with a small detachment of new militia men to reach the northern army. This reached Fort Edward when the funeral services over the remains of Miss McCrea had just been commenced. After her burial the detachment marched onward toward the rear of the army. Before they came up to it it was ordered to make a detour away from their line which it was supposed could be accomplished during the day. Their commissariat consisted of a single piece of pork, sufficient to last them until they should reach their comrades. This was placed in a pot and set upon a fire, and as the boy of the party, young Lansing was installed cook and left alone to watch the fire. After regarding the pot attentively for an hour or two with nothing to amuse him, he fell asleep, and awoke to see a bear which had been attracted by the savory mess running off with the pork. He had obtained it by upsetting the kettle from the fire and capturing the contents. Young Lansing was confounded and it required a very little flight of imagination to present to his minds eye the picture of his

hungry companions when they should return and find their pork gone through his neglect. He therefore concluded, rather than meet them, to avail himself of a hiding place where he could remain until their anger should subside. The party came back and found the contents of the pot missing, and seeing nothing of their cook, concluded that he had been killed by the Indians, and their pork consumed by them. But when he turned up, their joy at his being alive overcame their disappointment. He completed a short term of service, and at its close was made an ensign in the regular army, and remained in the army until the close of the war. The reason of his settling at Oriskany is perhaps worthy of note.

When quite a lad he had accompanied a surveying party up the Mohawk. At the mouth of Oriskany Creek it landed, and found the Indians of the village engaged in a dance. He was struck with the beauty of the clearing, with its surrounding forest. Often after he left the army this scene was recalled to him, and after a few years spent in Washington County, the memory of the spot led him to visit it and purchase a farm there and erect a house, in which he spent the residue of his life. He died in 1831, respected and beloved by all who knew him.

At the time Judge White arrived in this county, with the exception of the clearings at Oriskany and Oneida, there was absolutely no land ready for cultivation, and no roads. Before the revolutionary war there were Indian foot-paths leading from Oneida to Fort Stanwix, and again from that point along the Mohawk to the German Flats, and again from Oneida through the present towns of Vernon and

Westmoreland to Fort Schuyler. There were no other roads, and these would not have admitted horse-back riders. The troops which, during the French war in 1758, passed up to Fort Stanwix, were forced to cut paths for their passage: but they had overgrown, and during the revolutionary war they had again to be cut anew, but they had left no roads. Judge White came up the river in a boat from Schenectady with his family and goods, and landed them at the mouth of the Sauquoit, which for several years after continued to be the usual landing place of the small boats which navigated the river. The territory then presented a very different scene from the one which now greets the observer—very different from that which greets the emigrant to the new lands in the western and south-western States. There the settler finds a soil ready for his plough; here no prairie met the vision of the former. Everywhere was unbroken heavily timbered forest, to be subdued only by the joint efforts of the axeman and cultivator. Severe toil was required to clear and fence and prepare the soil for the agriculturist. It was literally the abode of only wild beasts and the redmen, whose living was obtained from the chase. There was no mill nearer than Palatine, and for two or three years the emigrant had to carry his grain upon his back for forty miles to be ground, or crush it in a primitive mortar made by burning a cavity in a log of wood. No house of worship nearer than the German Flats invited the emigrant from the land of the Pilgrims and their churches to worship the God of their fathers. His task was to convert this territory into a fit abode for more than two hundred thousand people who now occupy it, covered with farms and homesteads and villages

and cities, adorned with churches, schools and institutions of benevolence and taste. Within the limits of less than a single century this has been done, and the wilderness has blossomed as the rose.

Within five years from the time Judge White planted his footsteps on the bank of the Sauquoit, the work had been well begun. Light had been made to penetrate the forest; farms had been partly cleared, and emigrants had established themselves in comfortable homesteads along the valleys of the Mohawk, the Sanquoit, and the Oriskany; highways had been opened from settlement to settlement. Whitesboro, Rome and Clinton had become small villages, Utica, under the name of Old Fort Schuyler, was still and for several years after but a small hamlet, with only a blacksmith shop, a small tavern, and a single trader. The late Mr. George Huntington informed me that in 1793 he arrived there on horse-back, and the tavern was unable to furnish him food for his horse. He inquired if there was no one in the neighborhood who could provide him with something to keep his animal from starving. The answer was there was no one but a farmer who lived about half a mile westward who had hay and grain for his own use, but none to spare, and he would not sell it. He inquired from where the farmer came, and was told from New England. Mr. Huntington found a man to go to him with the horse, and tell the farmer that its owner was a young Yankee, just arrived, and he wished, on account of his Yankee brotherhood that he would entertain his starving horse. The farmer who was the late Stephen Potter, known both as Captain and Deacon Potter, was pleased with the manner of the request, and

replied that he would take care of the horse. The next day when Mr. Huntington called upon him, he refused to accept any pay for the service from his Yankee brother. A lasting friendship was then commenced between the two. I will here relate an anecdote of the captain and his friend Mr. Huntington which illustrates the integrity of the Yankee farmer. Mr. Huntington had contracted for a large tract of land on Frankfort Hill. The seller of the land had failed to convey it and a suit was brought by Mr. Huntington for damages they depending upon the value of the land. It became important to prove this and knowing that Captain Potter was acquainted with the land, he directed his attorney to subpoena him as a witness, but charged him not to offend the old gentleman by undertaking to get an opinion of him in advance, as it might lead him to suspect that it would be an attempt to induce him on the strength of his friendship for Mr. Huntington to influence his testimony. The trial came on, and the attorney refrained from inquiring from Captain Potter in advance his opinion of the value of the land. He called him to the witness stand. He asked him if he knew the land; he replied, yes, every foot of it. Well, Captain Potter, do you know its value? Yes, sir. Very well, tell us what it is worth? The old gentleman paused a moment, until the court, the jurors, and the spectators had fixed their eyes upon him when he slowly said. "Well, if I had all the gold that I could draw with my four yoke of oxen on a sled upon glare ice, and I had to invest every cent of it in land, I vow to God, I would not give a dollar an acre for it."

An involuntary shout of laughter filled the court house.

Mr. Huntington at once discontinued the action, but his friendship with Captain Potter continued.

Until after the year 1800, no one foresaw the dimensions Utica was destined to attain in less than a century, nor dreamed that it would become the important commercial and manufacturing city it now is, the ornament of central New York with its abodes of wealth and cultivated taste, and adorned with its beautiful churches, educational establishments and asylums for the relief of suffering infancy, and for the solace of those, who in the evening of their days, might suffer the evils of want and homeless poverty. The prophets of the day regarded the crossing place from the Mohawk to Wood Creek at Fort Stanwix which connected the canoe navigation from Schenectady to Lake Ontario as likely to become the site of the leading town in central New York. The length of this portage was but two miles. Enterprising men in the eastern part of the State, at a very early day directed their attention to the connecting of the waters of the two streams so as to open a navigable channel for batteaux from Schenectady through Oneida Lake and the Oswego River to Lake Ontario. In March, 1792, an act was passed by the Legislature incorporating a company "for the purpose of opening a lock navigation from the navigable waters of the Hudson to Lakes Ontario and Seneca," under the style of "The Western Inland Lock Navigation Company." The company was organized with a board of directors consisting of some of the leading men in the State, with General Phillip Schuyler as president. An examination of the Mohawk from Schenectady to its confluence with the Hudson showed so many difficulties in its passage around

the Cahoes, that it was deemed inexpedient to construct that part of the line. The company thereupon concluded to commence the navigation at Schenectady and by clearing out the shallow places on the Mohawk and Wood Creek and constructing a canal around the Little Falls and another from the Mohawk to Wood Creek complete a navigation through Oneida Lake to Lake Ontario.

It is hardly credible at this day that there was not engineering skill in this country sufficient to direct the construction of this work ; yet such was the fact. Mr. William Western, a gentleman of education and a skillful engineer was brought from England to assume charge of the work at what was then deemed the enormous salary of £1,000 sterling per annum. The navigation was completed in 1797 and continued to be used until the Erie Canal was finished. The dimensions were too small to be very important as a channel of commerce. The locks were seventy feet in length and seven feet in width and calculated for the passage of batteaux drawing 21 inches of water. The boats navigating it could not at the ordinary stage of water carry more than five or six tons of cargo.

Another anecdote indicating the progress of engineering in this country may not be uninteresting. The late Benjamin Wright, of Rome, while a youth, spent some time with Baron Steuben, assisting him in the survey of his lands. While Mr. Western was engaged in superintending the construction of the canal and locks at Rome, Mr. Wright was employed by him as an assistant. After Mr. Western returned to England, General Schuyler expressed a regret to

Mr. Huntington who had charge of the canal that he had not employed Mr. Western to make a topographical map of the Mohawk, as he knew no one who could be procured to do it. Mr. Huntington told him that he had a young man who could do it, and named Mr. Wright. General Schuyler employed him to make a survey and map showing the levels of the river, and was delighted with the skill with which it was made.

When the law was passed for the construction of the Erie Canal, Mr. (then Judge) Wright was selected as one of the chief engineers, and continued to discharge the duties of his office until it was finished. He was afterwards engaged in various important public works, and was universally regarded in the very front rank of American engineers.

For several years Whitesboro continued to be the leading settlement and the commercial centre of the county. The road westward from Albany to Schenectady, then following up the north bank of the Mohawk, was still a country road, and a very poor one at that. In 1787 the first turnpike-road in the State was incorporated. It was to construct a turnpike between Albany and Schenectady, so as to facilitate the direct crossing of the ridge between the Hudson, at Albany and the Mohawk, at Schenectady. The company was not organized, and just a year after another act was passed incorporating a new company under the title of the Great Western Turnpike Company. This made the road from Albany westward.

It is to the construction of this turnpike-road that Utica is indebted for her subsequent growth. Commissioners were appointed to determine its route. It was a question

with them where it should cross the Mohawk. The tradition is that Judge White was opposed to having roads with toll-gates. He wished all the roads to be free in his neighborhood so as to invite emigration; and he insisted to the commissioners that they should not cross at the old Sanquoit landing on this account. The late Jedediah Sangor had just established himself at New Hartford, and built a flour-mill there. He was a man of forethought, and foresaw the crossing at Fort Schuyler would necessitate a straight road to his settlement, and tend to build it up, and he had no fear of toll-gates. By his influence the road was made to cross there.

When the road was completed, Utica, instead of Rome or Whitesboro, became practically the head of the river navigation, and the point of departure of wagon transportation for the western country. The navigation from Rome westward to Lake Ontario never became very important. Westward from Rome there was no good road to the line of the turnpike to furnish Rome a convenient point of departure from the river. The land lying westerly was a deep swamp. The turnpike engrossed the largest share of transportation from Utica westward, and a very considerable part of that from Albany. But up to 1804 Utica had not become so large a village as either Rome or Whitesboro.

The early settlers of Oneida County were in a large proportion men of intelligence, culture and enterprise. Within a very few years they erected churches and established schools in all the settlements. As early as 1793, Hamilton Oneida Academy, the germ of Hamilton College, was established. The Rev. Samuel Kirkland, the Apostle of Chris-

tianity to the Heathen Oneidas was the principal mover in the enterprise. This was the first incorporated academy west of Schenectady. Among its first trustees were General Alexander Hamilton, Chancellor Lansing, and Egbert Benson, then one of the justices of the Supreme Court. An academical building was erected, the corner-stone having been laid by Baron Steuben. The academy was originally intended to be enlarged into a college, and in 1812 a college charter was granted to it by the Board of Regents of the University. The charter was eminently a liberal one. It was intended that the college should be free from sectarianism. Its first board of trustees included leading farmers, clergymen, lawyers, and merchants, men of various denominations of religion. In 1823, when a committee of the trustees visited the college to make examination in relation to a college difficulty, its members consisted of a Presbyterian, an Episcopalian, and a Roman Catholic.

As early as 1791 Congregational churches had been gathered in New Hartford, Kirkland and Marshall, through the missionary labors of Doctor Jonathan Edwards, familiarly known as the younger Edwards, who was subsequently president of Union College. In 1793 Presbyterian churches were founded in Whitesboro, Utica, Westmoreland and Trenton, and the next year in Camden and Augusta. In most of the other towns churches of various denominations had been organized. An Episcopal church was gathered in Utica in 1798 by the Rev. Philander Chase afterwards Bishop of Ohio and Illinois, and within a short time another in Paris.

The origin of the Baptist church in Oneida County is interesting as showing the character of one of its principal

founders and his influence in building up his denomination there.

In 1796 Rev. Stephen Parsons organized a Baptist church in Whitesboro, and received to its communion Caleb Douglass, then a blacksmith. Mr. Parsons remained its pastor but a few years, when Mr. Douglass, who had been the most active of its members was called to the ministry as its pastor. This was in 1802. He was a man of great energy and of profound religious convictions. As a part of his belief the christian minister should not pass a definite stage of preparation for his work, but should by careful reading of the holy scriptures and prayer qualify himself, so that led by the immediate influences of the Holy Spirit he could faithfully and effectively preach the gospel. As a necessary consequence the christian pastor should not be paid for his services. He should not in the language of the day be a *hireling*. These two positions he earnestly inculcated in his preachings and pastoral visitations. And he illustrated them by his practice. He continued to be a blacksmith, on week days working at his anvil, and on Sundays administering to the spiritual wants of his flock; and instead of being indebted to his congregation for any part of his support his house was the abode of hospitality for his brethren and the sojourn of his parishioners during the interval of worship on Sunday. He continued to preach to his people and to perform missionary labor in gathering and organizing Baptist churches and administering the sacraments throughout the county and in the neighboring towns for some twelve or fifteen years. He frequently urged upon his hearers the evils of a learned and a hireling clergy. At length a young

man who had been graduated at Dartmouth College and had been ordained in the Baptist church, visited Elder Douglass. He was induced by him to remain his guest until the next Sunday when he preached for him in both morning and afternoon services. It was Elijah W. Willey, subsequently an approved and successful Baptist minister for many years. When Mr. Willey closed his afternoon service, Elder Douglass arose, and addressing his congregation told them that he had administered to them in sacred things some fifteen years and had endeavored to lay before them the bread of life to the best of his ability; that they knew his views concerning the sacred ministry; that he had often warned them against a learned and a hireling ministry; that his views had yielded to his deep convictions of his error; that he had experienced the want of more learning to render his preaching properly instructive; that he was now convinced that a pastor should be well educated in christian learning and that he should be constantly acquiring knowledge to be the pastor as well as the teacher of his flock; to do this he must have leisure and must be supported by his church, and become what he had frequently designated a hireling. He then told that he had become an old man and soon must give up his labors, when his church would have to receive another, to become their christian pastor. They had now present a young brother who had the advantages of education, who had just preached to them. He would be happy if they would chose him to be their minister, and pay him for his services, a salary sufficient to support him. To show them that he was in earnest, he proposed they should start a subscription for the purpose, and he would lead it with what was a large sum.

The good old man resumed his seat. The congregation was astounded, but they had unlimited confidence in the judgement of the elder, and his argument had commanded universal assent. The subscription was filled, and Elder Willey was installed as a learned and hireling pastor. The good old blacksmith after a few years removed from Whitesboro to a western town, where he subsequently died in a good old age, universally respected and beloved. It is many years since, but those of his acquaintances who survive, remember him with affection and cherish his memory as of a saintly man, more worthy of honor and respect as an apostle of his faith, than thousands who are decorated with the degrees of half a dozen universities. It is now rare to find Baptists who do not regard education and pastoral support with favor, and its members are generally inclined to award a generous support to their ministers.

A notice of the erection of the first Methodist church in Rome, will awaken the memories of some of the older of my auditors. A Methodist society was formed in that village, early in the present century, but until 1826 it had no place of worship. Its members had become prosperous in their circumstances and concluded to erect a church. They very naturally wished to erect one to compare in architectural beauty favorably with those of the other religious communities in the town. After due consideration, the trustees adopted a plan for one with a modest steeple in two sections. A Methodist meeting house with a steeple, was then unusual, and the consciences of a portion of the brethren and sisters who adhered rigidly to the early traditions of Methodism were not

a little disturbed as such a manifest departure from Christian simplicity. Church meetings were called and sharp lines drawn between the steeple and no-steeple men and women, and abundance of theological logic was brought into play. The question was brought before the lowest church court and then carried by successive appeals to the highest—the general conference then held at Pittsburgh. After profound and learned arguments this body disposed of the question to the satisfaction of most of the two parties, by adjudging that as the lowest section of the steeple would serve a good purpose for a bellfrey and hold a bell to call people to church—that might stand, but that the upper section not being intended for use but merely for ornament, like other vanities should be abandoned by sober christian people.

The judgment was submitted to and carried out, and it was said that this was the first Meeting House in the land with a steeple. Some, however of the older members of the church used to their day of the death to call it a “steeple house.”

The Methodists since then have made decided progress in Church architecture. At this day some of the handsomest ecclesiastical structures in the country have been built by Churches of their denomination.

The march of Oneida County during the whole period of its history, has been largely owing to the high standing of her early inhabitants in intelligence and culture. A large proportion of its men and women were persons of superior intelligence and worth in their several positions. The political questions that agitated the whole American people, were held with singular tenacity. Under the first four

Presidents of the United States, there was a decided predominance of Federalists in the country. Until the days of Jacksonism the method of nominations to public office by both parties, was not made as now by delegated conventions and primary meetings. An invitation would be published inviting the members of the party to a county meeting to make nomination of candidates. These meetings were generally attended by but few gentlemen. Those present selected candidates whom they recommended. I remember in my boyish days going to see what turned out to be the last Federalist meeting held in the County. It was called to nominate candidates for election to the Assembly, the old court-house in Whitesboro being the place of meeting, and not being half filled. After the meeting was organised a committee was formed to recommend persons for candidates. They reported a ticket with the late General Joseph Kirkland at its head. He arose and thanking his friends for the compliment respectfully declined the honor. A vote was about being taken on a motion to excuse him. He again arose and declared that his engagements would not permit him to accept the nomination and asked that some one might be selected to fill the place. The meeting laughed at his remonstrance voted unanimously not to excuse him, and insisted that he must be the candidate.

I was present some years after this at a meeting of those who favored the second election of John Quincy Adams, to the presidency. It was held at the Presbyterian Church in Whitesboro, which was crowded, as it was understood that the late Henry R. Storrs who was then a member of Congress would address his constituents. This was simply a

county meeting. After an eloquent address by Mr. Storrs, an elector was nominated with entire unanimity.

The first nomination of Mr. Storrs to Congress illustrates the habits of the politicians of the day. Since 1820 Oneida County has with singular unanimity adhered to what in the days of Henry Clay was called the American system—favoring a protective tariff. But it was not always so.

Prior to the war of 1812, cotton and woolen factories had been erected in several towns, and the wants of the country during the war had given to them prosperity. After the war Congress revised its tariff in the interest of protection. This did not meet the views of some of the farmers who were staunch federalists. In 1820, there was a congressman to be elected, and the leading men of the Federal party were in favor of selecting the late James Lynch afterwards of New York then a resident of Rome. He was a gentleman of high social position, good standing at the bar, and of pleasing manners. He had lived at Rome several years where he had built a large mill and satinet factory. No one else was spoken of as the person to be nominated. The county meeting assembled. It was composed of a few leading men from Whitsboro and Utica and a few of the most influential farmers of the vicinity. A committee was constituted of five or six members to select and report to the meeting a candidate. The Chairman of the meeting named the committee, placing upon it three of the farmers, who were leading men in their towns. The committee retired to consult, and the farmers happened to be opposed in principle to a protective tariff, and afraid to send any one to Congress, who owned a satinet factory, and who would, of course,

as they supposed be in favor of legislative protection to manufacturers. The other members of the committee tried to quiet their opposition, but in those days nominations were regarded as simple recommendations and were not made by bargain and sale to be carried by the force of political machinery, which first buys up a convention and then registers its decrees to be carried out by dragooning, the simple members of the party under whip and spur to sustain them. After earnest discussion, it was found impossible to overcome the free trade scruples of the farmers on the committee, when a gentleman proposed the name of the late Henry R. Storrs. This was satisfactory to all and he was reported to the meeting as the candidate and adopted by the meeting by a unanimous vote. He was subsequently elected. This was the commencement of his political career. Judge Bacon, in his lecture on the bar of Oneida County, has given you a happy sketch of him. He possessed talents as an orator, at the bar, and in Congress, that have never been excelled. He had a commanding person, with a wonderfully rich and flexible voice. In the open air he could speak in a whisper so as to be heard by an audience of ten thousand men; and he could elevate it to thunder tones without stretching it. His gesticulations were exceedingly graceful. He possessed a rare command of language and his mind was filled with elegant learning always at his command. His power over his audience was electric, whether exercised, to excite merriment or tears, or to carry conviction to the reason. Henry Clay said of him that he was the most eloquent man who had ever spoken in Congress.

During Mr. Storrs' first congressional term the country was agitated with the question of admitting Missouri without the power to hold slaves. Mr. Storrs was of opinion that Congress had no power under the terms of the compact by which her territory had been acquired and the laws passed inviting its original inhabitants to bring their slaves into the territory, to impose the condition upon her. He therefore voted for her admission without restriction. It was an unfortunate vote, and he was so censured for it by his friends, that he declined a re-election, and General Kirkland was called to his place. At the end of the term of the latter Mr. Storrs was nominated for the position by the "Bucktail Party," as it was called, formed from democrats opposed to DeWitt Clinton, and oldtime federalists, whose early warfare, against Mr. Clinton, led them instinctively to oppose him. Mr. Storrs was elected, and at the next election became a candidate in opposition to the Democratic party and was re-elected. He was twice after this elected, and it had become understood that it mattered little who nominated or opposed him, he would command the vote of Oneida County. At the close of his fifth term he removed to the City of New York where he practised his profession during the residue of his life.

I may here to advert to a controversy which once excited Utica and the towns of Whitestown and Rome, but which has long since been forgotten by most of your citizens. Whitesboro and Rome had at an early day been the seats of court houses and divided the courts of record. By the year 1817, Utica had grown beyond the limits of both these villages, and its inhabitants conceived the idea of making it the sin-

gle shire town of the county. It was perfectly clear to the Uticans that it was the central town and the proper place for the courts. The early supremacy of Rome and Whitesboro was held for naught, very much to the disgust of their inhabitants who had borne the front in the battle of pioneerism and who boasted the possession of the most learned lawyers in the county. They were aroused and sent agents throughout the northern towns obtaining remonstrances against the proposed wrong and by placards posted in every tavern and horse-shed depicted the disasters that would flow over the County and indeed the State from the removal of the courts. Among other things to protect themselves and the county, a newspaper was established in Rome under the name of the *Oneida Observer*, which continued there until the court house controversy was terminated by the triumph of the joint power of Rome and Whitesboro, when the newspaper was transferred to the democratic party and removed to Utica. I believe the journal is perpetuated under the same name and that it has during its whole existence done battle valiantly for the democratic party in all its windings and turnings of doctrine.

Whitesboro for many years continued to hold half the county courts, and divided with Rome one half the circuit courts; until at length Utica quietly absorbed them all. With this exception, I believe that Oneida County has never had a general quarrel among its citizens. A little generous rivalry was awakened at the time the Black River Railroad was projected, but the strife soon ceased when the rival parties had come to the bottom of their purses. The ancient friendship was then speedily restored and Rome en-

tered upon a new course of progress which has made it one of the most beautiful cities of the State.

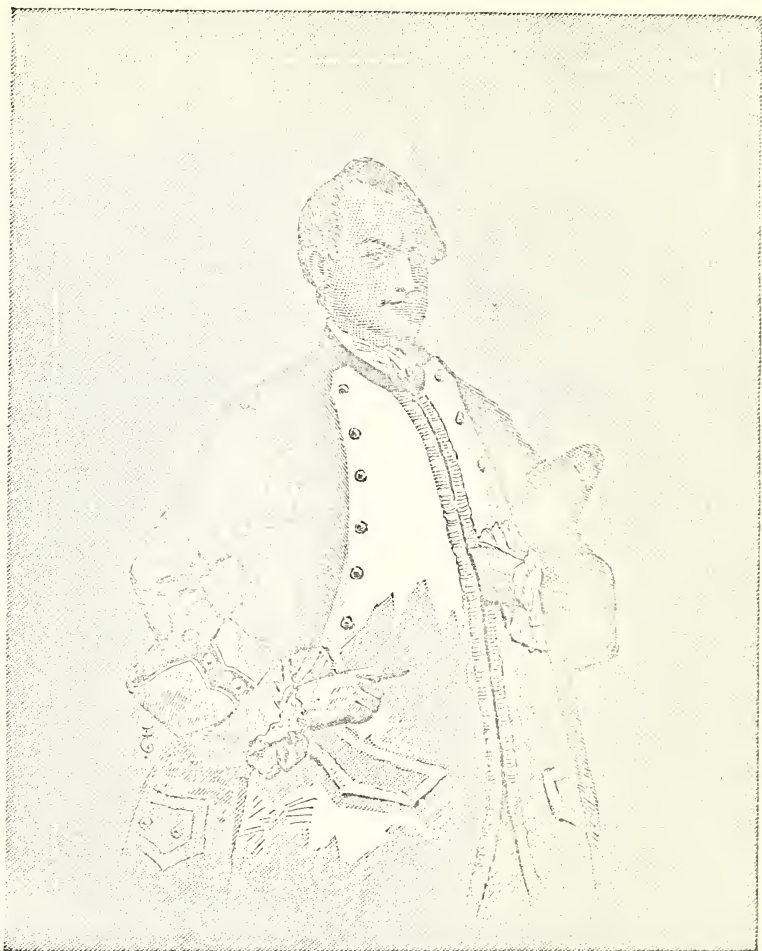
The labors of the early inhabitants of Oneida County achieved for it a high standing among the counties of the State. No one of them has enjoyed the labors of a more learned and self devoted clergy; none has had a more talented and accomplished bar; none a more distinguished body of medical practitioners; no county has distinguished itself more in institutions for the relief of suffering and infirmity; few counties but Oneida have had their large hearted Faxtons with the spirit of Peter Cooper, to become the executors of their own wills in bestowing the fruits of long life labors for the cause of education and humanity. Your orphan asylums and homes for the aged and infirm, your public schools and academies; and your Hamilton College and your Whitesboro Seminary have been producing the legitimate results of their creation; and among other associations your society formed to perpetuate the story of its progress. Nowhere are more beautiful farms, more tasteful homesteads with their ornamental grounds and gardens to be found, and he who can ride throughout your territory without admiration of its landscapes must be singularly unappreciative of real beauty.

The first white settler of Oneida was Samuel Kirkland, her apostle—a missionary of the cross. Many of the sons of Oneida have followed his example by giving their lives as christian missionaries to heathen lands all over the globe. I should love to rehearse to you all their names, but most of them are graven on your memories and will be known

and remembered wherever the records of christian missions shall be preserved. Of the sons of her early settlers, two have been Senators in Congress and three or four members of the House of Representatives, and among them an Admiral and two Commodores in the Navy, and several Generals in the Army.

Gentlemen of the Historical Society:

I thank you for the compliment you have conferred upon me, a son of Oneida, to address you at this anniversary. I see among you many of the friends of my youth and early manhood, and your presence warms the blood that still sympathizes with these surviving companions of many years. I regret that I have been unable to tell you more of the history which has brought the settlements of our fathers down to near the close of its first century. May her future be as bright as the past has been successful and may her future sons and daughters follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before, leaving examples of which we are all justly proud.



Peter Schuyler

ORATION

AT THE

DEDICATION OF THE SITE

OF THE

Fort Schuyler Monument,

(UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE ONEIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.)

JULY 4th, 1883.

BY

ISAAC S. HARTLEY, D. D.

UTICA, N. Y.

ELLIS H. ROBERTS & CO., PRINTERS, 60 GENESEE STREET.
1883.

13257

FORT SCHUYLER IN HISTORY.

BY REV. DR. ISAAC S. HARTLEY.

Mr. President, Friends and Fellow-Citizens:

Beneath these genial skies and amid an atmosphere fairly laden with the music of freedom and joy, and on a day when as a people we took our place among the distinct nationalities of the world, we have here assembled to mark a spot pre-eminently historic to us, the citizens of this emerald city.

There have been periods in our history when, laying aside our usual avocations, we have been called together to consider questions bearing upon our national polity and life. And there have been seasons when, awakened by the din of war and the clash of arms, we have convened to arouse, enlist and equip brave hearts and strong arms for the conflict. But at this hour, though drums beat, bugles sound, flags wave and the measured tread of soldiers in martial array is heard in our midst, we have come to rescue from threatened oblivion the humble site, around which more than a century ago our fathers gathered, and from whence they sallied forth to glorious victory.

America, rich in fertile valleys and noble streams, has none, however, more historic than those which these wooded hills garrison, and where flow yon rapid rippling waters. The great Roman orator tells us that, when he was at Athens, he could scarcely move without meeting some record commemorative of illustrious deeds or of illustrious men. The thundering eloquence of Demosthenes and the divine ethics of Plato were floating in the air. So here; every field, every forest, every acre and yon waters suggest memories dear to every freeman's heart, and such as all true Americans should delight ever to recall.

From the time in which it was known that this beautiful valley led to the great lakes and the extensive prairies of the west, it has been the avenue along which the most valiant forces have moved, as well as the scene for struggles bitter, persistent and sanguinary. True, those of the whites who were the first to thread it from the east were our own Dutch forefathers, and like their fathers were in quest of the trade which made them the most successful mer-

chants in the world; while those who passed in from the west were the missionaries of the cross, who, as they followed its grassy level, held high in air the symbol of their faith. But though the cross and commerce so early entered its verdant gates, only a few years passed ere it witnessed scenes, than which the pages of history nowhere record any more terrible or severe. Here it was where the Five Nations made their home, whose Tekawhoge, or war captain, was always of the Mohawks. First, these confederate tribes were in league for the preservation of their own cabins and hunting grounds. Later, when strengthened by the addition of the Tuscaroras, they formed an alliance with the Dutch. Still later, they became wedded to the English; later still, they were friends of the white man of every nationality.

For more than a century the grand problem that was ever presenting itself to the more aggressive nations of Europe was, shall the vast area of the Iroquois become a dependence; or shall the red man retain his native fields and remain the sole monarch of the western world? The attempts to solve this far-reaching problem have made this valley most historic, and gave to its early people the name of "The Romans of America," while it led the Spartans of classic Greece to be called "The Mohawks of the Old World."

It does not comport with the exercises of the hour that I should sketch, even rudely, the events of which the acreage about us is so suggestive, and which these hills once looked down upon in silent awe. Yet, who in this assembly that knows where he stands can fail to recall the associations so surely connected with the spot, aside from the fact that works were here erected for safety and defense. Over the very area whereon we are now gathered lay the only frequented road through this part of the valley. Some two centuries ago could we have looked down upon this very locality, as did the eagle from his secluded nest, we might have seen Father Ioques with his associate brethren in quest of the wigwams of the Mohawks, to acquaint their dusky tenants with the story of the cross; and a little later, missionaries from our own Dutch church at Albany desiring an acquaintance with the western tribes contemplating their mental and spiritual improvement. Indeed, anterior to this, an Indian delegation went eastward asking from their Albanian friends to be taught anew the Christian truths, that by dying in the Christian faith, they might obtain the Christian reward. We might have seen likewise the brave chiefs of the Iroquois as they journeyed—now for a national council—

now to carry to their captors new tokens of their fidelity and allegiance. In truth, no warrior, no soldier, in war or in peace, no itinerant, no discoverer, nor army of any nationality could move to the right or left without passing the field about us, and thus the site we would this day perpetuate. It was the natural and traditional path. The original trail from the brambles and bushes of the Mohawk here terminated, and also the trail which led from the higher grounds and the thicker forests at the west.

Referring to the topographical features of our immediate neighborhood, in early days, two trails or paths lay on either side of the river; one leading to Fort William at the west, the other to a route by the wooded banks of the Black River and thence to Canada. Along this latter trail the French traveled in their overland incursions aimed at the expulsion of the settlers on our northwestern frontiers. As it branched off some ten miles or so to the northwest towards Fort William, it made a more circuitous route to this part of our State than the trail on the south side of the river; of which our own Genesee street, with its numerous stores and palatial houses is merely the development. A few rods to the east of us a little rivulet flowed, and it still flows bearing the present name of Ballou creek; or, as it was called by our Dutch fathers, *Schwein Fresser Kill*, making its outlet in yonder curve in the broader current of the Mohawk; while a hundred or more feet to the west, on the north bank of the river, Reels creek emptied its babbling waters. Insignificant tributaries to the Mohawk! True, but in their day though secondary streams they had a historic import quite equivalent to the early Tiber, or to the more pellucid current of the Tagus. If the waters of the Adonis were esteemed sacred by the Asiatics, and the Phrygians rendered honors to the Marsyas and the Meander, and the conquering Greek, previous to his ruffling the surface of the Sinde, poured libations into it from golden goblets, every lover of freedom should hold most dear yon streams for the services they have rendered to American growth and to American glory. The meeting of these two humble rivulets, coming down from the cooling springs born in yonder hills, laden with sand and gravel, and entering the river nearly opposite each other, made the Mohawk fordable; and I need hardly say it was the fordableness of the river that constituted the place where we are now assembled the highway of this valley. On the angle of land formed by the south bank of the river, and the west shore of *Schwein Fresser Kill* the Fort was located, whose site we this day would mark. Consequently it guarded not merely the river itself,

which when in repose reflects the evening star and the blush of morn, but the tortuous travel east and west that led to it. Its site then was most wisely chosen. Its position made it one of the gates of this valley, nor could a friend or enemy pass seeking the east by the Mohawk, or the west by the double trail without paying to it, if demanded, proper tribute.

Remembering, then, where we now stand, how numerous must have been the scenes to which this site has been witness! But when I speak of the scenes with which this place is so surely connected, I have not in mind so much those in which loving peace is so often eloquent, and upon which orators and poets always delight to lavish, and appropriately, their loftiest praises, when

Buried was the bloody hatchet—
Buried was the dreadful war club—
Buried were all war-like weapons,
And the war cry was forgotten—

rather am I thinking of what Avon's bard so truthfully described as

“That son of hell
Whom aagry heavens do make their minister,”

of war, savagery, slaughter, rapine, and all that kindred terms so naturally suggest. It is said that a single mound remains, with here and there a ditch, to mark the ancient site of the old city of Verulam. But connect these debris of her former greatness with her history, and the mind instantly becomes moved, and deeply. Once she enjoyed all the rights of Roman citizenship. Here the brave Queen Boadicea defended the Roman army. Here St. Alban received his martyrdom. Here, also Britain knew British, Roman, Saxon, Danish, Saxon and Norman dynasties. So when I pause to recall where we are now met, scene after scene passes before me just as great and changing. Indeed, in imagination, I can see the moving to and fro of Indian scout, fired with revenge, learning when and where his inflamed passions shall next be given their sway. I can see the fleeing of bleeding, decimated and homeless families hurrying hither and thither, crimsoning their way with blood, seeking that protection which civilization and only civilization can give and perpetuate. I can see cruel hordes advancing from yonder marshes to scalp, to wound, to kill; and the marching of Saxon forces to check, to conquer and to tame. Nor is it difficult to recall the alternate moving and retreating of Indians, French, Dutch, English, flushed with the hope of speedy victory,

or disheartened and crushed by sudden defeat. For the Caucasian knew this spot, as did the lowly and cruel red man. No doubt it has been the passive observer of many a skirmish, and, it may be, bitter struggle. And as at yonder ford the weaker rested to bathe, so the stronger availed themselves of the pebbled path and hurrying over, sought victory beyond.

Omitting the earlier scenes with which this part of our lovely valley is fairly burdened, let me ask; was it not through the very fields whereon we stand that the sachems so often passed for their peculiar talks to the ancient place of treaties—Albany; that the adventurous Bradstreet crossed with his armament for Oswego; and when its Fort was completed that the motely brigades of Mercer, Schuyler and others marched to occupy and defend it; and that the relief corps of Webb so sluggishly journeyed? Indeed scarce had the rude posts of the stockade settled in their holes ere Prideaux and Johnson reached yon ford with the confederate troops of New England and New Jersey on their way to Niagara; breaking camp at Canajoharie on the 19th, and journeying by this site on the 30th of June. The same was true of other commanders, and other forces bent on kindred missions. As the tides rise and fall, or flood and ebb, so have valorous hosts moved to and fro before this place—now to defeat—now to victory—now to victory—now to defeat. In yonder meadow the gallant Herkimer bivouacked after his glorious victory at Oriskany—that royal struggle which turned the current of the Revolution and ended in our national birth. Beyond a doubt the first water that cooled and cleansed his mortal wound was dipped up from yonder daisied bank. The wily St. Leger also would have rested here had not the brave German assured him, by bullet messages, that the longest way round was the shortest way home. Here Arnold halted in seeking the relief of Fort Stanwix.

Numerous, very numerous, are the associations of this place; nor is there an area in all central New York abounding in memories of men more noble, in events more decisive, or in scenes more thrilling and important.

Referring, as I now am, to some of the events that have made this section of our valley so historic, may I add; few have ever estimated the strategic importance of central New York, and the bearing its topography has exerted upon our national destiny. In the line of hills a little to the south of us, no less than three streams have their rise, which with our own gently flowing Mohawk and the Hudson command nearly one-half the eastern area

of these United States; and by following the course of our streams and valleys we can invade no less than twenty States and two-thirds of the territories of the union. Streams form a nation's natural defense and are her proper highways; so have believed the mighty conquerors of the past, and much later the confederates in our recent war. In no mean sense then, New York State commands the union. Nor can there be but one government on this continent so long as our rivers, valleys and mountains remain as now. The honored President of this society, Horatio Seymour, the sage of Deerfield

Qui decori decus addit avito,

assures us that, in company with General Winfield Scott, from an elevated point near the confluence of the Mohawk and the Hudson rivers, he overlooked the range of highlands which marked their courses; and that the hero of so many battles, stretching out his arm, remarked: "Remember this has been the strategic point in all the wars waged for the control of this continent." And this is simply one of the highlands of our State. Add to it those of which I have just spoken, those wooded summits which the sun first doth gild, and from them we can pass down not merely to our seaboard cities, but to the vast, vast acres which make our reunited and prosperous country.

The Fort that formerly occupied this site was built in 1759; more than forty years after the erection of Forts Ticonderoga and Onondaga, and some forty-seven years after Fort Hunter, the latter being the first Fort erected among the Five Nations. It was merely one in a long chain of similar structures that united the waters of the Hudson with the deeper and bluer waters of our western lakes. On the west, the nearer were Forts Bull and William, with Forts Herkimer and Hendricks at the east. It had its origin in the colonies desiring to strengthen themselves in this valley, and the necessity of supplies and ammunition being conveniently located, as well as shelter for the settlers when threatened or pursued by thirsty and bloody foes.

Under date of July 16, 1755, the lords of trade wrote to Governor Hardy for an opinion as to the best system to be laid down for the defense of the frontiers; for the management of the Indians; what Forts should be built, where located, and the number of troops required to give efficiency to the colonies. Hardy, in replying to this communication, suggested that three Forts should be erected on the northern frontiers; one on the Hudson

river; another at Lake George; a third at or about where Wood creek and South Bay mix their waters; another in the Onondaga country where the general councils of the Six Nations were held; and still another some eighty miles to the west of Oswego. They were not, however, to be equal in extent, nor of the same magnitude. On the contrary, he expressly mentions that some, as Fort Onondaga, need not be very strong, as a picketed one with a number of block-houses would be sufficient. The recommendations of the governor were adopted. So soon, therefore, as authority arrived for their erection they were begun. As General Shirley at this time was in command of the north and western frontier, he undertook the construction of the more needed ones, leaving the less important to be built after the completion of those demanded for strategic purposes. To his honor and magnanimity be it said, not one was located arbitrarily. On the other hand, he not only sought the permission of the Indians, but solicited also their active co-operation. Notably was this true of the Fort built at Oneida. Ere, however, the plans of the government could be carried out, Shirley was superseded by the Earl of Loudon; it was, therefore, under his administration that this particular Fort was built, and from whom also it received, so to say, its charge. Before the Indians yielded their assent to the multiplication of defenses among them, inasmuch as they were desired for the present emergency, and their erection somewhat interfered with their fishing and hunting places, and they who garrisoned them too frequently abused their privilege, it was expressly stipulated that all minor posts should be destroyed, so soon as the war ended.

The size and shape of Fort Schuyler I have yet to learn, as well as the special character of its construction. As Fort Stanwix at Rome was erected the year previous, and at an expense of nearly three hundred thousand dollars, and upon the most true and approved scientific principles of military engineering, it is not probable that the Fort on whose site we are now met was either as costly or extensive. Rather, since the completion of Fort Stanwix gave abundant accommodations for a large garrison, and afforded complete shelter for supplies and fugitives, it is more than probable that it was a simple block-house, with openings for cannon and musket, and palisaded so as to furnish proper protection to all needing it for safety or aggressive warfare. I thus speak, for such was the character of the Forts to the east which occupied similar subordinate positions. In Barber's collection of New York, we are told that the "first building erected within the limits of

Utica was a mud fort, during the old French war. It was situated between Main street and the bank of the river a little eastward of Second street." When Fort Schuyler had accomplished its mission, or the war over, the authorities kept the promise made to the allies, and with other constructions of like character, it was given over to decay.

Following the custom of the day the Fort was named for an officer, at this very period in the active service of his country, Colonel Peter Schuyler, of New Jersey. Already had the noble deeds of Peter Schuyler, of Albany, become household words; but as the dash, bravery, heroism and philanthropy of his namesake were daily coming more and more into view, and were commanding the astonishment and admiration of his countrymen, it received his name, simply as a feeble acknowledgment of the services he had already rendered the government, as well as a reminder for further faithfulness, devotion and sacrifice.

That the Fort was called for the Jersey and not for the Albanian Schuyler, we need but recall the custom that prevailed at this day in naming every stockade or defense for an officer then in active service. Unhappily when its foundations were laid Peter Schuyler, of Albany, had been in his grave twenty-five years, while his namesake of New Jersey was in command of the Jersey Blues then garrisoning Oswego. Nor among all the officers in the army was there one more popular, self-sacrificing, or the recipient of higher honors. When others were timid and doubtful, he was bold; when they parleyed and delayed, he was nervous and anxious for action; when the State was unable to pay its troops, he advanced moneys for the same from his private resources; and more especially, when the general government could not and did not ransom her soldiers from captivity, Peter Schuyler, of New Jersey, became their deliverer by personally purchasing their redemption, and with no hope of return. Indeed his bravery, patriotism and philanthropy endeared him to the whole country. It is likewise the testimony and tradition of his descendants still living in New Jersey, that it was their ancestor for whom this Fort was called; and at this very hour their choicest heirloom consists of the sword once worn by their noble sire during his campaigns in our valley, when the old block-house first came into being. While Peter Schuyler, of Albany, had frequently given his services to his country, and enjoyed a most enviable reputation among the Indians, he was, however, more a man of peace; in fact, he was offered the honor of knighthood for his civic services. Peter Schuyler, of

New Jersey, was a man of war, and for his military dash and sagacity received the commendation of the English parliament, through William Pitt; while the colonies manifested their gratitude for his great philanthropy by frequently rendering him unwonted honors.

As in studying the early history of this section of our State, we frequently meet with the names Fort Schuyler and Old Fort Schuyler, may I observe in passing, that during the Revolutionary war an attempt was made to give the name of Schuyler to the Fort erected on or near the site of Fort Stanwix, at Rome; while the Fort which we this day would commemorate was alluded to as Old Fort Schuyler. But as these two Forts derived their names from two different individuals of the same distinguished family, so did they occupy different sites. To repeat, our Fort Schuyler derived its name from Colonel Peter Schuyler, of New Jersey, and of Indian renown; while the Fort which supplanted Fort Stanwix was called after General Philip Schuyler, of New York, and of Revolutionary memory.

Here an imperfect sketch of the Schuyler family will not be out of place.

The family of Schuyler has always played a most important part in the history of our commonwealth. The first who appears on the historical page was Philip Pietersen Schuyler, a pure Hollander, who came to these western shores in 1650. His ancestral acres lay about the famous old city of Dordrecht. After an honored career, he died on the 9th of May, 1683, O. S. and was buried in the old Dutch church at Albany. His fourth child bore his father's name, nor was he any the less distinguished. He was born at the city of Albany, and after its incorporation became its first mayor, occupying this position from 1686 to 1694. In 1688 he received the commission of major of the militia, and before the close of the year was given command of the Fort in his native city. He was also made a member and, at a later period, became the president of his majesty's council for the province of New York; and for a while acting governor of the colony. He was chief commissioner for Indian affairs, and held that arduous and responsible position many years. To impress the government of Queen Anne with the character of its allies, in 1710 he visited England, taking with him several Iroquois chiefs with whose constituency he was on terms of intimacy. As a token of her respect for the services he had rendered the government, Queen Anne presented him on his return with a silver vase. This was the Schuyler whom the Indians loved to call "Brother Queder." He died in 1724.

The ninth child of Philip Pietersen Schuyler was John, whose son John was the honored father of General Philip Schuyler, the trusted and tried friend of America, and who fought so bravely for her independence. He was baptized, as was his friend Benjamin Franklin, on the day of his birth.

The sixth child of Philip Pietersen was Arent Schuyler, who was born in the city of Albany in 1662. He was given the name of his maternal grandfather. He married Jenneke Teller, November 26th, 1684, and commenced house-keeping on North Pearl street, Albany, as the records read, "in the house where the eagle hangs out." The notarial papers inform us that as his name Arent meant eagle, he hung out in a cage a live eagle, to mark his residence, instead of a door plate. About the year 1693, he removed to New York city. In an Indian deed dated July 13th, 1696, he is styled, "Merchant of the city of New York." Having purchased, however, an extensive tract of land in New Jersey, near Pompton, he removed there perhaps in 1706, and ever afterwards regarded this State as his home. In April, 1710, he purchased an additional farm on New Barbadoes Neck, the present site of Belleville, to which he removed the same year.

As an illustration of the surprises that await the more bold and adventurous, let me relate an incident which, as we shall see, gave him no mean wealth, as well as social influence, in his adopted State. As one of his negroes was plowing, he happened to turn up a greenish heavy stone, which he took to his master, who, discovering that it contained copper, sent it to England for analysis. It was found to possess eighty per cent of this valued metal. Desiring to reward the faithful and thoughtful slave, Schuyler asked him to name three things that he desired most, assuring him that his wishes would be gravely considered. The slave answered first, that he might remain with his master as long as he lived; second, that he might have all the tobacco he could smoke; and third, that he might have a dressing-gown like his master's, with big brass buttons. Schuyler suggested he should ask for something more. After a moment's thought, the negro replied "that he might have a little more tobacco." How true that were the loftiest ambition of some fully gratified, it would end in smoke!

The family of Arent Schuyler consisted of his sons Philip, Casperus, John, Peter, Adoniah, and his daughters Eve and Cornelia. His third son William died in infancy. Peter, his fifth son, the noble man whom we this day would honor, was born on his father's farm in 1710; whether the one at Pompton or Belle-

ville it is difficult to say. Of his early days little is known beyond his receiving a liberal education, and such as qualified him for future usefulness.

His father dying in 1730, and leaving him by his will some seven hundred and sixty acres of land near the Rahway river, on the site of the present city of Elizabeth, led him to make New Jersey his home. He married Mary, daughter of John Walter, of New York, a man of considerable influence and great wealth, who lived at this period in Hanover square in the same city. It appears he had but one child, a daughter named Catharine; to whom, as his will reads, he bequeaths all the residue of his estate, and her heirs and assigns for ever.

But rather than occupy ourselves with the biography of Colonel Schuyler, since he was quite a prominent figure in the struggle in which the colonists were now engaged, let me, though necessarily very imperfectly, review the condition of the country at this time, and as we unfold it, mark the man.

From the hour in which the French had obtained a foot hold on American soil, and had become acquainted with its general character, they coveted to make it a dependency of the French crown. For the accomplishment of this purpose, every known expedient was resorted to from actual purchase, to forcible expulsion. To add efficiency to their design, a chain of Forts was begun to extend from Canada to the mouth of the Mississippi; while later they were planted westward as far as the present city of Detroit; thus literally to hem in the colonists, and when the proper hour arrived to take possession of the country. The formal declaration of war, by the powers in Europe in 1744, added to the growing hatred of the contending parties; and laid open our frontier State wider to all the horrors with which they had become already too familiar. Indeed, the atrocities of the French rapidly assumed such proportions, that the province became most clearly impressed with the conviction that their only permanent safety lay in the conquest of Canada, and in making it a tribute to the English realm. With this in view, Governor Shirley, of Massachusetts, proposed at once the capturing of Louisburg, and particularly it, since all conceded this settlement to be the key to the French occupation. At the same time aid was dispatched to Oswego, the many frontier Forts were strengthened, and measures entered upon to engage the Iroquois in the war now upon the nation. While the colonists were thus paying their attention to the invaders at Cape Breton, all the country, especially that

portion along our northern frontier, was kept in perpetual disturbance, by the actions of the French and their tawny allies.

But to attempt any history of the atrocities of the French at this time, along the frontiers of our State, would be merely a recapitulation of the massacre at Schenectady in 1690, and the still later barbarities of Wyoming and Cherry Valleys. As they were of an uncalled for character they awoke a spirit of determined resistance among the colonies, and spurred them to vigilance and action. Among other results they drew Colonel Peter Schuyler from his Jersey acres, and led him to offer his services to the country. This was in 1746. The records of the acts of the New Jersey legislature for this year contain the following: "For colonel of the forces raised in this province for the intended expedition, it is unanimously recommended his honor, Peter Schuyler, Esq., a gentleman well-known to several members of this board, of good estate and reputation, and very proper to be commissioned for the purpose." Having accepted this high and responsible position, our hero was immediately ordered to proceed to Oswego, to garrison the Fort, and make ready for any service to which he might be summoned. Surrounding himself with the troops he had been able to enlist, on the third of September he embarked at Amboy, en route for Oswego, via the Hudson river and Albany. As the government, however, had failed to furnish the necessary additional force, that was to come from England, Schuyler, after a delay of five months in Albany, was recalled. Though deeply chagrined at the failure of the home government to redeem its promise, and the inefficiency also of those who had the care of colonial affairs, this experience, however, simply brought out some of his more prominent characteristics, and led the authorities to see with whom they were dealing. During his detention at Albany, he informed the New Jersey governor that his men were in want of a surgeon, medicine, shirts, flints, colors, bread and peas. Besides this, unless they soon received their pay, they had threatened to leave; taking with them their arms and ammunition. In Governor Hamilton's reply to their communication, he complimented Colonel Schuyler for the zeal he had shown in his majesty's service; and at the same time gave him assurance that that very day he had ordered for each one of his soldiers a pair of shoes and two speckled shirts. But as the troops felt that this promise of the authorities would be similar to others with which they had become acquainted, Colonel Schuyler, fearing they might desert, advanced from his own private means several

thousand pounds, enough to meet their wants, and to silence all their murmurs. The more important needs of his men having thus been met, Colonel Schuyler was ordered to proceed to Saratoga and await the commands that there would be sent him. Unfortunately, the same experiences that had overtaken him while at Albany were here repeated; and they were met in the same way. In the mean time, articles of peace were signed at Aix la Chapelle, which bringing an end to the war, left Colonel Schuyler nothing to do but to return to New Jersey; where, after a few weeks' delay he found himself engaged once more in his former labors.

Though the war had been officially declared to be at an end, so far, however, as America was concerned, after all nothing really had been gained. On the contrary, the country had greatly suffered, and so had humanity. The boundaries between British and French possessions were yet unsettled; nor had either contestant acknowledged the right of the other to portions of Maine; but more particularly to the basin of the Ohio. With such important questions unadjusted, the opportunities for renewing old hostilities were exceedingly frequent; so much so that even an unprejudiced mind easily discovered them. The following added very much to the accumulating complications. The English government, (under the treaty of Lancaster of 1744) had permitted Virginia to assume the right of territory as far west as the Mississippi. In harmony with this treaty, a large grant of land situated on the Ohio river was given to several individuals of wealth and influence, residing in England and in Virginia. The grantees on taking possession of their property naturally adopted measures for their government and protection. The government in Canada having learned of these proceedings, and regarding them as an intrusion upon French rights, informed the governors of New York and Pennsylvania of the encroachments thus made; and warned them that in case they did not desist, such steps would be taken as the invasion of a domain demanded. His threats receiving no attention, in pursuance of his purpose, the French governor ordered his troops to the town of Pickawillany, in the valley of the Miami, to demand its surrender with the English traders therein and their effects. The Indians in charge, declaring that the English were their guests, refused; whereupon the French assaulted the town and destroyed the Fort; and to show, it may be, the determination with which they proposed to carry out their measures, the king of the Piankeshaws was sacrificed

and eaten. Thus, in Ohio began anew that flame whose buried fires were once more to illuminate not simply the western frontiers, but the homes and the hearths of all the colonies.

Dinwiddie, the lieutenant governor of Virginia, regarding conduct so unprovoked as tantamount to an invasion, in 1753, dispatched Major George Washington with a letter to the commander of the French forces in the Ohio, demanding that he withdraw from the territory of his majesty, and make due explanation for an act so dastardly and cruel. De St. Pierre then the commander of the Ohio, who received this letter, replied that he had acted from instructions given him by the governor general of Canada; still he would forward to him the communication. While the correspondence was progressing, the French increased the difficulties by fitting out an expedition under Duquesne to occupy the Ohio valley; learning which the Indians determined to resist. Two fleet runners passed down this very valley to the home of Sir William Johnson with belts, soliciting his assistance. At the same time an Indian envoy met the French at Niagara, and warned them back. Nothing daunted, however, they pushed on, till they came to the harbor of Erie, where they were again entreated to return. As the speech of Tamacharisson, the half king, brought a reply from the French commander that proved a hurricane to the flames already smoldering, permit me to reproduce the two in their entirety. "Father," said the Indian, "you are disturbers in this land, by taking it away unknown to us and by force. This is our land, and not yours. Father, both you and the English are white; we live in a country between. Therefore the land belongs to neither the one nor the other of you; but the Great Being above allowed it to be a dwelling place for us; so, father, I desire you to withdraw, as I have done our brothers, the English."

"Child," replied the French officer, "you talk foolishly; you say the land belongs to you; but not so much of it as the black of your nails is yours. It is my land; and I will have it, let who will stand up against it." What arrogance! What assumption! Who can wonder that such words should quicken, inflame and curdle even Indian blood.

The mission of Washington proving as fruitless as the entreaties of the Indians, on his return to Virginia preparations were immediately made to assert the right of the colonists. As soon as possible a regiment was raised, and under the command of Washington moved for the Ohio; but meeting with defeat

nothing was accomplished. Already had the French advanced as far eastward as the present site of Pittsburg; and aided by a strong force under De Contrecoeur possessed themselves of the Fort the Virginians had here erected. It was at this time that the colonists were exhorted to confederacy. Accordingly, on the 19th of June, 1754, a conference of commissioners from every State north of the Potomac met in Albany, to consider a plan which their own needs and the exigency of the hour demanded. It was the opinion of every member of the council, that a union of all the colonies was absolutely required. From this hour the French discovered the English were in earnest; nor were they deceived. The States having become confederated felt their duties and responsibilities. Concerted measures were therefore prepared, not merely to check the advance of the French, but to drive them out of the country. Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia immediately voted supplies for the campaign, and many of their valiant sons were soon on the march. The resolves of the colonists quite paralyzed the home government. While, however, it was hesitating, the Duke of Cambridge, early in 1775, sent over General Braddock with a detachment of the army in Ireland, to be used by the colonies as were their needs. One of the first measures adopted by Braddock after his arrival was calling together the several governors, for the double purpose of learning the true condition of affairs, and to agree on some plan for united action. This council convened at Alexandria, in Virginia, April 14, 1755, at which the following four expeditions were agreed upon: The first was to be directed against Fort Duquesne, to be commanded by Braddock in person; the second, to capture Forts Frontenac and Niagara, under General Shirley; the third, to seize Crown Point, under the leadership of General William Johnson; while the last, under Lawrence, the lieutenant governor of Nova Scotia, was to reduce this province, according to the English interpretation of its boundaries.

It was now that the martial and patriotic spirit of Colonel Peter Schuyler became again aroused, and that he puts his sword and life at the control of his country. Since his former campaigns had made him quite familiar with frontier life, he was at once ordered to occupy with his regiment Fort Oswego, which he did, reaching it July 20, 1755. As Braddock, however, had just experienced an inglorious defeat, which exposed the State of New Jersey to the inroads of the French hirelings,

in December of the same year, he was instructed to abandon Oswego, return home and prepare for such contingencies, to which it was thought the recent reverses must lead. During the winter, he occupied a block-house on the banks of the Delaware. In the spring, on his return to the north, he was ordered back to Oswego, which, after many delays, he reached July 1, 1756. On his arrival, learning that Montcalm had determined on the invasion of the province, and that he proposed to begin by the reduction of the Fort at Oswego, Colonel Schuyler prepared himself for the threatened conflict. Meanwhile, the provincials, learning through Indian spies of the proposed attack, instructed General Webb to march with the force at his command to Schuyler's relief. He failed to arrive in time. The Fort was attacked with great earnestness and vigor. When the struggle began, Colonel Schuyler was posted with his men some six hundred yards to the westward of the Fort, in a small, unfinished redoubt, used for keeping cattle; and in the afternoon of the same day was busy in cutting down the bushes near the Fort and making fascines. The next morning, Colonel Mercer, the commander of the garrison, was killed. On learning his death, Lieutenant Colonel Littlehales sent for Colonel Schuyler, and, after a council of war, orders were issued to cease firing and prepare for capitulation. Colonel Schuyler opposed the surrender; but being over-ruled was obliged to yield. It would be difficult to find in all history a more ignominious submission, though it stipulated that the entire garrison should march out with the full honors of war. On razing the Fort, Montcalm immediately returned to Canada, carrying among other prisoners, the brave, uncompromising Colonel Schuyler, the hero of this happy hour.

Though in captivity and in the hands of his enemies, if caring for one's command and mitigating the hard trials of his fellow-countrymen, situated as was he, in providing for their wants, and in aiding the poor Indians who, through this and other disasters to provincial arms, had fallen into French hands, be any indication of loyalty—or true manhood, even in Canada, Colonel Schuyler was none the less active in the interests of his country than when in the field. His military abilities, social position and magnanimity of spirit were soon discovered by the French, and duly acknowledged. Liberties were accorded to him that others had never enjoyed, which he embraced; nor did he ever abuse them. As he loved his country and its flag, so did he love her sons and her wars.

Away from the noise of war and in retirement, he spent his time not in planning new campaigns, nor in devising means for escape; but in visiting, comforting and caring for the unhappy prison soldiers about him, English, American and Indian, who, through the chances of war, had become captives. Fathers and sons, who could ill be spared from their homes, he gladly and promptly ransomed from his private purse; while for the sick he procured unusual attention, knowing no nationality in his ministries of sympathy and love. In fact, during his stay in Canada, he was allowed by the authorities to have a house by himself, whose doors were ever wide open for his countrymen, all of whom were free to visit him; nor were any who sought his kindly counsel or benefactions sent empty away. At this period in his history, he advanced more than twenty thousand livres to secure the release of Indians, personally caring for them until they were able to be returned to their homes. Many provincials received advances in money, far beyond their ability to pay; and when reproved for his liberality, he informed his censors that his silver could not be better bestowed. Noble man! O generous heart! When will others, with far greater means, be moved with similar feelings for our common humanity, and learn this plain lesson, that moneys expended in the interests of those who put their lives at the service of their country, is spent most humanely, most wisely. Let those in our city, whom fortune has favored, give as freely of their accumulations or inheritance as did Colonel Peter Schuyler, for the heroes who have gone forth from the homes about us, and this very hour, not only would many a domestic want be met, but in some one of our streets we should see a monument commemorative of their sacrifice and heroism, as stately, grand and beautiful as any which the sun this day gilds, or which this night the stars silently watch and so gladly look down upon.

In the autumn of 1756, Colonel Schuyler was allowed on parole to leave Montreal and visit the city of New York, bearing a commission from the governor general of Canada to make terms for the exchange of prisoners. He arrived in New York in November; and as his reputation for sympathy, kindness and great philanthropy—all that he had done for the redemption of his captive countrymen had preceded him, he was received with unusual demonstrations of joy. The same evening the city was illuminated, bonfires were kindled on the common, and an elegant entertainment awaited him at the King's Arm Tavern, where the public generally testified their great gratification at his return.

The next day he set out for home. His neighbors and friends welcomed his arrival with cheers and the booming of cannon. On visiting Newark the following day, the roar of cannon again awaited him; the dwellings, also, of the people were illuminated, an honor which they felt pre-eminently due him for his humanity, as well as for his self-sacrifice and devotion to his country's interests. On going to Princeton, similar marks of respect and consideration were bestowed. As he entered that now classic town, the citizens went out to meet and escort him to his stopping place; and as he approached, a young lady advancing, thus addressed him:

Dear to each muse, and to my country dear,
 Welcome once more to breathe thy native air;
 Not half so cheering is the solar ray
 To the harsh region of a winter's day;
 Not half so grateful fanning breezes rise
 When the hot dog-star burns the summer skies;
 Cæsar's shore with acclamation rings,
 And, welcome *Schuyler*, every shepherd sings;
 See for thy brows the laurel is prepared,
 And justly deemed a patriot, thy reward;
 E'en future ages shall enroll thy name
 In sacred annals of immortal fame.

Thus was it whenever he journeyed. The entire State was moved by his presence, and the distinguished in every walk of life strove to do him honor. As many of her private sons could not forget the favors which they had received, no more could the State withhold paying him, on all proper occasions, the honor which his services had so often and nobly won.

But the days of his parole soon passed away. In obedience to his promise, should no exchange be made in his absence, he prepared to return to the city of his captivity. William Pitt, and even the king himself, complimented him for the zeal he had manifested in the service. Still, on the expiration of his parole, neither was able to redeem him. Even his jailer, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, referred to him as "the brave old Peter Schuyler." Leaving, therefore, his home he set out for Montreal, July 1, 1758, arriving there late the same month. Before his departure from New York, General Abercrombie invested him with full powers for such an exchange of prisoners as the interests of the country demanded. To what extent he was able to carry out the commands of his senior officer is not known; but it is known that shortly after his arrival at Montreal he was exchanged for M. De

Noyan, the commandant at Fort Frontenac. Once more then at liberty, he returned home, having been absent nearly six months. But he did not journey thitherward alone; on the contrary, he gathered up such English prisoners as he had been able to exchange, and many also whom he had purchased from their captors with his private funds, paying for the same a very high price. Indeed, it is said on his arriving at Fort Edward, he had in his company no less than eighty-eight men, women and children; among whom was Mrs. Howe of New England, afterwards the heroine of a romance styled, "The Fair Captive." Mr. George W. Schuyler of Ithaca, N. Y., in furnishing me with this interesting incident adds: "while a prisoner Mrs. Howe was sought but not won, by two Canadians, father and son. Her situation was embarrassing, but Colonel Schuyler came to her relief. He secured her from her suitors by buying her of her owner." Unhappily during Colonel Schuyler's captivity the war lost none of its virulence, nor had the nations come to any better understanding of their rights, than if a sword had not been drawn. True, several attempts had been made at invasion, and numerous plans had been proposed for attacking the French and dispossessing them of their lands; but owing to serious disagreements among British and American or provincial officers concerning rank, and the breaking out of small-pox in the army, nothing permanent had been accomplished. The recent advent, however, of William Pitt to the premiership of England gave the colonists new hope, and inspired them with new purposes. On his accession, three expeditions were immediately proposed, one against Louisburg, the second against Crown Point and Ticonderoga, while the third was directed against Fort Duquesne; resulting in the reduction of Louisburg, the occupation of Fort Duquesne, but defeat at Crown Point and Ticonderoga. Though the events of the year did not equal the expectations which had been entertained, from the joy and enthusiasm the change in the English ministry had put into the heart of the colonists, the advantages gained were marked and decisive. The acquisition of the island of Cape Breton opened the way to Quebec and up the St. Lawrence; and the success in the west enabled a stronger force to be brought against Canada. It was, therefore, determined to attempt by an overwhelming force once more the subjugation of Canada; and thus close a war which had been so detrimental to the interests of both nations. Now it is that the brave Colonel Schuyler is called again to the front with his Jersey Blues, and with the combined forces of the provinces advances northward.

In this expedition, he shows the same care for his soldiers, and exhibits the same devotion to his country's welfare as in his former campaigns. But without following the army as it moved for the Canadian lines, it need only be said that, this last invasion resulted in the colonists, under Lord Amherst, finding their way to Montreal; in De Vandreuil surrendering all Canada; and in our hero, Colonel Peter Schuyler, entering victoriously the city, and seeing the flag of St. George float in glorious triumph on the very gates which but a short time before had kept him in captivity. It need hardly be said that peace soon followed, though the treaty for the same was not signed till November, 1762. On the capitulation of Canada, Colonel Schuyler immediately returned to his home on the banks of the Passaic, where after a brief rest, he died, March 7, 1762, in the fifty-second year of his age; leaving behind him a reputation for loyalty, bravery, benevolence and chivalrous honor, unexcelled by any who had been engaged in the conflict now triumphantly closed.

In person, Colonel Schuyler was tall and hardy, rather rough it may be at first view, yet, after a little acquaintance revealing deep and genuine sincerity. In conversation, he was above all artifice, or the traffic of forms; yet he enjoyed friendship with a true relish, and in all the relations, what he seemed to be, he was. A newspaper of the day concludes its reference to his character in these words: "Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them."

Such, friends and fellow-citizens, is a rapid outline of the man, and of his relation to our country, for whom this old Fort was called; nor could it have received a name more honorable, or one that could awaken throughout the entire country more real, genuine love and enthusiasm. It may have been, some officer gave it this name because Colonel Schuyler had ransomed him, and thus returned him to his home. Be this, however, as it may, it was the tribute of the province to a bold, brave, determined, kind and faithful soldier and citizen. I greatly rejoice that our loved city has blended with its origin a name so noble and so historic, and one so free from stain and reproach, that other generations, as well as our own, will delight to respect and invest it with that accumulating glory which at all periods is so fully its due.

I have dwelt too long upon the events with which Colonel Schuyler was associated to think of commenting upon the suggestiveness of the exercises in which we are now engaged. There come to me thoughts upon which I should love to dwell, and that

never can be too frequently alluded to, or too plainly expressed. My friends, we but too feebly estimate the struggle in which many of our honored sires were engaged, the price, the fearful price, that has been paid for our country's liberties, and the great courage, devotion and sacrifice they represent. A nation knows nothing of abiding peace till nerve, muscle, heart, soul, all we hold most dear, have been taxed to their utmost, and its altars have been made crimson with blood. Under a benignant and overruling providence, the peace and prosperity we this day enjoy come from the zeal, faith, courage, consecration and suffering of those who have gone before. In this world, beautiful as it is, peaceful acres represent the price of blood. Would to God that we might remember this truth, not for vain glory, but to honor such as we this day recall, to thank, to reward, to perpetuate. I trust that the time has forever passed when the tread of marshalled men shall again shake this continent, and this beautiful valley shall again resound with the notes of war, either for aggression or defense. Our inheritance to-day is peace. Being therefore peace, our only ambition should be to keep it, guard it most jealously and sacredly; to be known and remembered for the multitude of our virtues, and for the noble aspirations of sanctified and cultivated genius. And the more so, since to attain this no city need be sacked, no fields devastated, nor blood shed, not even a tear fall. Next to suffering and dying for freedom, is the noble duty to preserve it. The old Jewish rabbi was right when he said that, were the sea ink and the land parchment, the former could not be able to describe, nor the latter to comprise all the praise of liberty. Liberty is the mother of every virtue and the best nurse of genius. The immortal Burke, in one of his impassioned sentences, asks, what is liberty without wisdom and without virtue? We answer it is nothing. It is a vessel without a rudder, a charter without a seal. Virtuous liberty should be our aim, as it has been the desire of all who have coveted its wealth, and who have sought its establishment. Every country that submits to be a land of slaves, deserves to be a land of ruin. An Italian poet once signalized his love of imperial Rome in these noble words: "Eternal gods! may that day be the last on which I forget the happiness of Rome." So should we think, and so should we say. He who is unwilling to imperil his life, if need be, at the summons of holy freedom, does not merit life. He who sincerely loves his country leaves the fragrance of a good name to many ages. But I can not say what I would. I close, then, by remarking that it

is written of Cicero, when he arrived at Athens, he desired to be immediately led to the tomb of Archimedes, no doubt to abandon himself to the inspirations which such a classic spot would so naturally excite. Let me say, however, at this hour, to all such as desire to lend themselves to the higher inspirations of valor, courage, faithfulness, zeal, philanthropy and all that goes to make up the honored citizen, the noble patriot, the brave soldier, the modest and unassuming philanthropist, come and visit this triangular site; and as you walk about its grassy sides, and gaze upon these warlike trophies that are to mark it, remember, it is thus that a grateful people would hallow the memory of their tried servants; and especially, that this city would forever embalm in her purest affections and patriotic memories the name of Colonel Peter Schuyler; he for whom its first structure was called, and which had it received his good old Dutch name would have stirred the proudest remembrances in every loyal heart, and such, in truth, as no African city, though rich in narrative and radiant with classic fame and glory, could possibly awaken.

One more period and I shall have finished. As a most fitting sequel to my remarks, and to commemorate also this happy occasion, there will now be flung to the breeze the first flag, bearing on a swan white field the original State arms, as reconstructed under the laws of 1882, and now the adopted insignia and banner of our noble commonwealth. As it rises up yonder staff, and unfolds itself to be caught and waved and kissed again and again by the passing wind, let it receive with its suggestive emblems, that joyful salutation from you and from me also, which its first appearance in our midst, and among the broad acres in our State, so properly merits.

Hail imperial Banner! speed thy virgin way,
Utica first doth greet thee—this thy bridal day.

The benediction was pronounced by Rev. J. J. Emmegahbowh, an Ojibway Indian missionary, in his native tongue.

ONEIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

1884.

COLONEL JOHN BROWN,

HIS SERVICES IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR,
BATTLE OF STONE ARABIA.

BY

REV. GARRET L. ROOF, D. D.

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AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE ONEIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AT
UTICA, N. Y., APRIL 28, 1884.

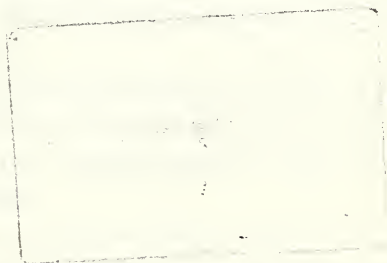
UTICA, N. Y.

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1884.

At the conclusion of the address of the Rev. GARRET L. ROOF, D. D., upon the civil and military services of JOHN BROWN during the revolutionary war, delivered by special request before the Oneida Historical Society at Utica, on the evening of April 28th, 1884, it was unanimously resolved, on motion of JOHN F. SEYMOUR, that the thanks of the Society be returned to Mr. ROOF for his able and interesting address, and that he be requested to furnish a copy to the Society for publication.

M. M. BAGG,

Recording Secretary.



COLONEL JOHN BROWN.

HIS SERVICES IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR—BATTLE OF STONE ARABIA.

The residents of the Mohawk valley will ever feel a deep interest in the career of Colonel John Brown, who in the fall of 1780, under the inspiration of a lofty patriotism, came with his Berkshire Levies to this valley, to protect its fields from pillage, its dwellings from conflagration, and its early settlers from the cruelty of a savage foe. This interest is doubtless enhanced by the consideration that when he first engaged actively in the business pursuits of life, he was a resident of this valley, and that he fell while fighting heroically on one of its battle-fields, near which his ashes now repose.

It may be proper here to remark that we are not to judge of the importance of the battles of the Revolution by the numbers engaged, but by the issues involved therein, which certainly were among the most momentous in this world's history.

We should then love to trace the glorious events in the lives of that little band of patriotic men who first raised the standard of resistance to British oppression, and by the wisdom of their counsels and their valor in the battle-field, secured for us the blessings of constitutional liberty.

It may not prove an easy undertaking to present the principal events in the life of Colonel John Brown with clearness, and in chronological order, as in the presentation of them, we will have to rely much on tradition.

And to tradition we should not always attach the fullest credence, even when supplemented by the written statements of persons whose lives were contemporaneous with the events they aimed to describe; for such statements, though honestly made, will sometimes be found to conflict to a greater or less extent with each

other. Hence are we often embarrassed by the scantiness of authentic materials for the faithful delineation of the characters of many of the heroic men of the war of our independence.

Among the patriots of the Revolution who, in the Mohawk valley, freely presented their lives as an offering on the altar of their country, was John Brown.

In the account I shall here give of this intrepid defender of the rights of the colonists, that this sketch may not be extended to too great a length, it will be my aim to present only what I regard as the most important and best authenticated events in his civil and military career.*

John Brown, who was the youngest of five brothers, was born October 19th, 1744, at Haverhill, in the State of Massachusetts.

BROWN STUDIES LAW.

He was graduated at Yale College in 1771. Soon after his graduation he became a law student in the office of his brother-in-law, the Hon. Oliver Arnold, at Providence, Rhode Island. After finishing his legal studies, he commenced the practice of the law at Caughnawaga (now Fonda) in this State, where he was appointed one of the attorneys for King George the Third. After a brief residence at this place, with a heart glowing with the enthusiasm of the times, he dismissed Coke and Littleton and the pursuits of civil and criminal jurisprudence, that he might be more active in the service of his country, and took up his residence at Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Here he soon engaged in the patriot cause. At this time the dispute between the colonies and Great Britain had assumed a threatening aspect. Taxation without representation was regarded by the colonists as an invasion of chartered rights, and as a direct violation of the British constitution. In fact, so

* The principal authorities consulted in the preparation of this address are as follows: "Campbell's Annals of Tryon County," "Lossing's Field Book of the Revolution," "Thatcher's Military Journal," "The Frontiersmen of New York," "Hough's Northern Invasion," "History of Berkshire County," "Stone's Life of Brandt," "Manuscript of Hon. Jacob Snell," "Relations of Henry Brown (son of Col. Brown), at personal interviews," besides traditional accounts from living witnesses.

determined at this time had become the spirit of hostility in this country to British aggressions, and so wide the breach between Great Britain and the colonies, as to lead John Adams to declare that "the trumpet of the Revolution had already been sounded."

During this excited state of the public mind, John Brown at once attracted attention by his commanding talents and by that love of country which was ever with him an inspiration, and which so signally marked his subsequent career.

HE BECOMES A MEMBER OF THE COUNTY AND PROVINCIAL CONGRESSES.

In 1744 he was chosen a delegate to what was then termed "a county congress," which convened at Stockbridge on the 6th July of that year. In that body, which was composed of very able men, he was appointed, with four other members, a committee to make a report on the obnoxious acts of the British Parliament, and their report was unanimously adopted. On the 11th October of the same year, he was chosen a representative from Pittsfield to the Provincial congress, which assembled at Concord. In December he was appointed by that body, with Dr. Joseph Warren, Samuel Adams, and others, a committee to open a correspondence with leading men in Canada friendly to the American cause, and to John Brown was committed "the difficult and dangerous task of sounding the disposition of the Canadians, instituting a Revolutionary party among them, and organizing a system of secret communication with its leaders."

BROWN'S FIRST CANADIAN EXPEDITION.

Upon the acceptance of his appointment as envoy to Canada, he resigned his seat in the Provincial congress and started without delay on his Canadian mission. After encountering many perils and enduring many severe hardships, he reached Montreal, where he met with a cordial reception from the committee of correspondence which had been organized in that city, and also from a delegation from Quebec. From them he learned, as he states, "that

the military commanders in the service of the king were intriguing to array the Canadian savages against the colonists; that there was no prospect of Canada sending delegates to the Continental congress, and that without the presence of a colonial army there would be no probability of an uprising there for the colonists."

This information he communicated without delay by letter to Dr. Joseph Warren and Samuel Adams, of the committee of correspondence.

ENGAGED IN THE CAPTURE OF FORT TICONDEROGA.

He suggested to the committee in the same letter the importance (should hostilities be commenced) of seizing as soon as possible the Fortress of Ticonderoga. The suggestion of the importance of seizing that post (as says the author of the History of Pittsfield) "was highly creditable to the political and military sagacity of Mr. Brown."

I will not stop here to dwell upon all the measures projected for the capture of the celebrated Fortress of Lake Champlain, which for a long time, in the new England States, had been regarded as the Key of Canada. Mr. Brown was decidedly of the opinion that the Green Mountain Boys were the persons who should be employed in the projected attack upon Ticonderoga; and that Ethan Allen was the most suitable person to command them in this important enterprise. Suffice it here to say, that Colonel Ethan Allen soon received directions from the General Assembly of Connecticut to surprise and take the Fortress of Ticonderoga; and that in obedience to these directions, this brilliant exploit was accomplished before sunrise on the morning of the 10th May, 1775, when the Fortress was surrendered to that intrepid commander in compliance with his famous demand made "IN THE NAME OF THE GREAT JEHOVAH AND OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS." John Brown, who was personally engaged in this bold enterprise, and whose name was honorably mentioned in Colonel Allen's official report, was immediately sent to announce the surrender of the Fortress to the Continental Congress. We next

hear of him in the First Canadian campaign in which he rendered important service to the colonies.

HIS SECOND CANADIAN EXPEDITION.

He now held the rank of major, and on the 24th July, 1775, duly commissioned, he set out on his second expedition to Canada, "to obtain," as he said, in his letter to Governor Trumbull, "the fullest intelligence of the military operations making by the King's troops, the Canadians and the Indians; to learn the situation of St. Johns, Chamblee, Montreal and Quebec; and the number of troops with which each was garrisoned; whether the Canadians designed taking up arms against the colonies; and whatever else it was of consequence, that an invading army should know." In this expedition Major Brown took with him a Canadian and three other men as guides; and had a long, tedious and an exceedingly perilous journey down the west side of Lake Champlain, through fields flooded by the lake, and also through extensive marshes, in which he was often compelled to camp at night. He had not traveled many days before it was suspected that he was a colonial emissary; and, to clear himself so far as possible, from all harmful suspicions, he professed to be a dealer in horses, and while engaged in this new vocation (in which it is not recorded that he had much success, as he seemed to have less dexterity as a horse dealer than skill as a diplomatist,) he went through the country, and learned much by secret conferences with French Canadians, and in various other ways, of the true state of Canadian affairs.

Not a few French Canadians, however, who were friendly to the American cause were sagacious enough to discover (as says one account,) and they so declared, that our American envoy was "an odd sort of a jockey, as he never got a nag to his liking." This account further states that "he was sometimes hotly pursued by a military force, and that on one occasion, a large squad of red-coats surrounded the house in which he lodged, from which he contrived to escape by a back window, and make good his flight." After many perilous adventures, "hair-breadth 'scapes," and sleepless

nights, Major Brown arrived at Crown Point on the 10th day of August, having obtained much valuable and important information for the American army. A full account of his adventures in this Canadian expedition would read somewhat like a legendary tale.

BROWN CAPTURES FORT CHAMBLEE.

Passing by matters of less interest in the career of Major Brown, (not to speak of the unsuccessful attempt to capture Montreal, the plan for the capture of which was proposed by Major Brown; but was not carried into successful execution by Colonel Allen,) we next hear of his brilliant operations at Fort Chamblee on the River Sorel. He had been intrusted by General Montgomery, (who was then engaged in the siege of St. Johns,) with the important undertaking of capturing that strongly constructed Fortress. Accordingly, on the 18th October, 1775, on a very dark night, under the directions of Brown, cannon were placed on bateaux and taken silently past the fortifications to the head of the Chamblee Rapids, and were soon put in position for attack. In fact the Fortress was now closely invested and at the mercy of Brown. Fifty Americans and four hundred Canadians were engaged in this expedition. The commander of the Fortress, Major Stopford, was suddenly aroused from his slumbers near midnight by a demand from Major Brown to surrender. The British Major had doubtless retired to his lodgings that night regarding his Fortress as a second Gibraltar. He believed that its massive walls could successfully resist any assault that might be made upon them; and that the Americans could not approach them with artillery, as the guns of the Fortress of St. Johns commanded the River Sorel on both sides for the distance of ten or twelve miles. Inexpressibly great, then, must have been his surprise (when awakened by the summons of Major Brown to surrender) to find the Fortress so closely invested and himself and his garrison fixed in such a state of "unpleasantness." Yet unpleasantly situated as Major Stopford was, he submitted the following modest proposals to the demands of Major Brown:

"The garrison should not be made prisoners, but should be permitted to march out with drums beating and colors flying; with their arms and accoutrements; and twenty-four rounds of ammunition each; and carts and provisions sufficient to pass by the shortest route to Montreal or any other place in the province at the option of Major Stopford."

This document is certainly a model of its kind; and it may be difficult to find its like among the memorabilia of military events.

Burgoyne once boastfully declared that "*Britons never retreat.*" When effectually hemmed in near Bemus Heights, confronted by the troops of Gates, to meet whom again in battle in the condition he then was, would have resulted in the destruction of his own army; with large detachments in his rear, cutting off his supplies, and with still other obstacles multiplying in that direction, Burgoyne could neither get back to Canada, as he desired to do by a hasty retreat, nor could he advance by a forced march to Albany, and there according to his declared purpose, "*eat his Christmas dinner.*"

Equally embarrassing on the dark night of the 18th of October was the situation of that son of Mars, the redoubtable Major Stopford. To abandon Fort Chamblee and attempt to retreat with his garrison under the cover of the night, would have been with him a futile undertaking. Equally futile would have been any attempt on his part to advance on the beleaguering force of Brown.

But the American Major was not to be influenced by "the option" or modest proposals of Major Stopford, and like a celebrated commander of later days, refused to consent to any terms but an unconditional surrender; and accordingly on the morning of the 19th the Fortress with its garrison was surrendered unconditionally.

The fruits of this bold and successful exploit (besides the surrender of the Fortress) were one Major, three Captains, three Lieutenants, a Commissary and a Surgeon, eighty-three non-commissioned officers and privates of the Royal Fusilleers, besides a large quantity of stores, including one hundred and thirty-four

barrels of gunpowder, which were of almost incalculable value to our needy and ill-disciplined army. At this time General Philip Schuyler addressed a letter to the Continental Congress, in which he stated, that Major Brown "during the past year had rendered extraordinary service."

ENGAGED IN THE SECOND CANADIAN CAMPAIGN.

Major Brown was also engaged in the second Canadian campaign. On the 31st December, 1775, he participated in the memorable attack on Quebec, in which General Richard Montgomery fell, and although he fell not like Wolfe or Epaminondas, in "the arms of victory," yet he exhibited in his brief career that sublime heroism and true nobility of character which have rendered his name immortal.

Major Brown was directed to co-operate by making a false attack upon the walls to the south of St. John's gate, and to set fire to the gate with combustibles prepared for that purpose, which duty he successfully performed. And during the subsequent siege of the city he occupied an advanced post with the soldiers under his command.

On the 1st August, 1776, Congress voted him the commission of Lieutenant Colonel, with rank and pay in the Continental army from November, 1775.

EXTRAORDINARY INTERVIEW BETWEEN BROWN AND ARNOLD.

It became well known about this time that an unfriendly feeling existed between Brown and Arnold. Brown had learned much of Arnold's base character and low intrigues.

An account of an extraordinary interview between these two military men, though doubtless familiar to most readers of American history, should not be omitted here. I summarize it from a more detailed account given by Colonel Stone, in his *Life of Brandt*.

When Arnold was quartered at Albany, during the winter of 1776-1777, a difficulty arose between him and Brown, which re-

sulted in the publication by the latter of a handbill attacking Arnold. The handbill contained these severe and scathing words: "MONEY IS THIS MAN'S GOD, AND TO GET ENOUGH OF IT HE WOULD SACRIFICE HIS COUNTRY." The handbill was read aloud at Arnold's quarters, and in his presence. Arnold at once pronounced Brown a scoundrel, and declared further that he would kick him whenever and wheresoever he should meet him. Brown saw Major Lewis, one of his most intimate friends, in the evening of the day when the handbill was issued, and then obtained from him an invitation to dine with his mess on the morrow, hoping at that time to meet Arnold. On the next day, shortly before dinner would be served, Brown arrived and was ushered at once into the room where Arnold was standing with his back to the fire. Brown then deliberately approached Arnold, and, looking him directly in the eye, observed: "*I understand that you have said you would kick me. I now present myself to give you an opportunity to put your threat into execution.*" Arnold was silent. Brown then added: "*You are a dirty scoundrel.*" Arnold still remained silent, whereupon, after a short pause, Brown apologized to the gentlemen present for his intrusion, and left the room.

I will not attempt to explain this continued silence on the part of Arnold, who was personally brave and had a very resentful disposition. The language employed by Brown on this occasion and in the presence of several gentlemen, had doubtless the possible merit of being sufficiently direct and explicit, but it was not such language as might have been expected from a gentleman of his refined manners and his well-known amiability of disposition. But it should be borne in mind that he had already endured much from the persecution of Arnold, and it may less surprise us then, that under a keen sense of the injustice done him by that bold, bad man, he should, in the employment of terms on this occasion, have transcended somewhat the limits of a gentlemanly propriety. With a *mens conscia recti*, he feared not to express publicly his opinion of the man who, he believed, would prove a traitor to the American cause; for it was as true of Colonel Brown as it was of Chevalier Bayard, that "he was without fear and without reproach."

Colonel Brown was a remarkably sagacious man; and it seems was the first person to detect and comprehend the true character of Arnold.

During the Canadian campaigns he had learned much of Arnold's profligacy, his base arts of dissimulation, his malignant disposition, his lavish expenditures of money fraudulently obtained, and the shallowness of his patriotism. He regarded him as a second Catiline "who made money his God," and harbored treasonable designs against his country, for he could not fail to discover in the character of Catiline and Arnold many strong points of resemblance.

The historian Sallust in his "Catiline Conspiracy," speaks of the arch Roman traitor in the following terms: "He was of a disposition equally profligate and depraved." "He was expert in all the arts of simulation and dissimulation, and covetous of what belonged to others." "His disposition naturally violent was hurried *to the execution of his design by the consciousness of his crime.*" What the Roman historian said of Catiline proved equally true of Arnold.

BROWN'S IMPORTANT SERVICES DURING THE BURGOYNE CAMPAIGN.

During the early part of the Campaign of Burgoyne, in consequence of the plottings of Arnold, Colonel Brown was not engaged in active service, but he could not long remain unemployed while his country was struggling to shake off the yoke of British domination.

He accordingly on his own account raised a regiment of militia, which he hoped in a short time to lead into the service of his country. The opportunity was soon presented. Colonel Brown was ordered by General Lincoln "to proceed to Lake George and destroy the British stores collected there, and release the American prisoners for whom that port had been made the depot."

This was an enterprise that greatly suited the adventurous spirit of Brown. With a detachment of 500 men he left Pittsfield, and soon reached Pawlet, the headquarters of General Lincoln.

From Pawlet on the 13th September, 1777, with his usual promptitude, he started on his expedition, and proceeding to the north end of Lake George, from the 13th to the 18th September, he had passed up Lake George, and captured all the outworks between its Northern Landing place and the main Fort at Ticonderoga (including Mount Hope, Mount Defiance, and the old French lines), an armed brig, several gun boats, 200 bateaux, five cannon and small arms in proportion to the number of captured soldiers. He had made 298 prisoners, besides the officers and crews of the Flotilla. He had released 100 American soldiers, and retaken the Continental flag which General St. Clair had left behind him at Ticonderoga in his great haste to evacuate that Fortress. The guns at Mount Defiance were then turned upon the Fortress at Ticonderoga, but without a successful result; and an attack made on the 24th on Diamond Island was also unsuccessful. In this expedition with the loss of only three killed and five wounded, Brown had fallen upon the rear of Burgoyne's army, and had virtually cut off his communication with Canada and his means for supplying his troops. This brilliant exploit was regarded as an event of the highest importance by the American army, and was certainly an essential link in the chain of events that soon rendered the surrender of Burgoyne inevitable.

INVASION OF THE MOHAWK VALLEY.

We now pass over a period of about three years in the life of Colonel Brown in which but little is recorded of the nature and scenes of his activities; and find the field of his military operations transferred to the Valley of the Mohawk.

In the fall of 1780, Sir John Johnson resolved upon the destruction of the settlements of the Schoharie and Mohawk valleys. His force consisting of British Regulars, Loyalists, Tories and Indians, numbering one thousand persons, assembled on the Tioga; marched up along the eastern branches of the Susquehanna, and crossed thence to Schoharie, aided much in their progress by the intimate acquaintance of several of the men with the topography

of the country. They made a desolating march through the most fertile parts of the Schoharie settlements; and on the 17th October reached Fort Hunter in the Mohawk valley at the confluence of the Schoharie Creek and the Mohawk river. From thence they proceeded towards Caughnawaga; and on the night of the 18th, bivouacked in the vicinity of "THE NOSE," a point well known through the Mohawk valley.

INDIAN BARBARITIES.

On the memorable night of the 17th and the eventful morning of the 18th October, the devastating march of the enemy presented a spectacle of horror, of which it is impossible to give an adequate description. Both shores of the Mohawk were lighted up by the conflagration of houses, barns and stacks of hay and grain. The abundant crops upon which the commissariat of the illustrious head of the American army largely depended, were laid waste by the ruthless foe. No regard was had by the savages and Tories for age, or sex or station, and their deeds of barbarity are written "with the scalping knife and tomahawk in characters of blood." The loud cries of terrified children; the sad moanings of aged and helpless men and women, as they saw their once fair homes wrapped in flames and themselves doomed to a fearful death; the piteous pleadings of mothers for their own lives, and for the lives of their infants, as they lay in their cradles unconscious of the cruel fate that awaited them, were alike unheeded by the murderous savage and the unfeeling Tory. These events furnish as dark a page in the story of human woes as that presented by the massacres at Cherry Valley and Wyoming.

It is difficult even at this day to suppress the feelings of indignation, that will rise in our breasts at the thought of the inhumanity of the British Government in employing savages in the war with the colonists; and in putting into their hands the scalping knife and tomahawk to effect the work of subjugation, and we yet recoil with horror from the words of Lord Suffolk, the British Secretary of State, who declared openly in the House of Lords,

that "the measure" for the employment of savages was "allowable on principle."

Soon after the news of the invasion of Schoharie reached Governor Clinton at Albany, in obedience to orders, General Robert Van Rensselaer, who commanded the Claverack, Albany and [Schenectady militia, started in the pursuit of the invading army. On the night of the 18th October, he encamped (as stated by the author of *The Life of Brandt*,) at "VAN ERS" now Fultonville, about nine miles, or (as stated by the author of *The Frontiersmen of New York*,) on a hill near "The STANTON PLACE," in the present town of Florida, about fourteen or fifteen miles east of the enemy's encampment.

General Van Rensselaer now learning that Fort Paris, at Stone Arabia, was to be assaulted on the next morning by Johnson's forces, dispatched a messenger to the commander of the fort with orders for him to march out on the morning of the 19th, at nine o'clock, and attack the invaders, while at the same time he would assist him by falling upon the rear of the enemy.

BROWN COMMANDER OF FORT PARIS.

Colonel John Brown was now in the command of Fort Paris with a force of two hundred and fifty, or (as stated by the author of *The History of Pittsfield*,) of three hundred men consisting mostly of New England Levies. This number comprised a few militiamen and volunteers from Palatine and the adjoining towns. Colonel Brown had a few weeks previously been at Albany, and while there, was offered the command of Fort Paris, which he readily accepted. The Fort was situated about three miles north of the Mohawk river, and the present village of Palatine Bridge.

BATTLE OF STONE ARABIA.

Early on the morning of the 19th October, Sir John Johnson, with his army, forded the Mohawk at KEATOR'S RIFTS, near the present village of Spraker's Basin; and then made a desolating

march in the direction of Stone Arabia with the intention of attacking Fort Paris.

The hour had now nearly arrived when the little band of Colonel Brown, in pursuance of the orders of General Van Rensselaer was to march out of the Fort to meet the enemy. It is related, that at about this time several of Brown's officers remonstrated with him against the ordered movement, regarding it as exceedingly injudicious; and that one of the men, well known as a brave soldier, addressed the commander in language of solemn warning, and recited the particulars of a remarkable dream that occurred to him on the night of the 18th, full of fearful forebodings. But the brave Colonel, it seems, had little faith in dreams or supernatural apparitions. No evil genius had appeared to him on the previous night, as is related to have appeared to Marcus Brutus on a certain night before the memorable battle on the plains of Philippi.

And ever prompt in obeying the orders of his superior officer, he gave no further heed to the soldier's dream, than did the first and greatest of the Cæsars to the dream of his wife, Calpurnia, or to the vaticinations of the soothsayer forewarning him of danger on the Ides of March.

DEATH OF COLONEL BROWN.

Everything being in readiness, at nine o'clock in the morning of the 19th October, Colonel Brown and his men sallied forth from Fort Paris to meet the enemy.

They marched towards Fort Keyser, a little stockade situated a mile and a half from the Mohawk river, which stockade they soon passed. After they had proceeded a short distance further one of Colonel Brown's volunteers discovered an Indian (who was less wary than others of his tribe) pursuing two women as they were fleeing from their homes. The Indian discharged his musket at one of the women. The woman fell, and as he ran to scalp her the fire of the brave volunteer brought the savage to the earth.

A destructive fire was then opened upon the soldiers of Brown, which though returned by them with great spirit, was on account of their exposed condition less effective than that of the enemy. Brown maintained his position for a time with his characteristic bravery; but finding eventually, that he was attacked by overwhelming numbers, who were gaining upon his flank, and that the army of Van Rensselaer did not come up as promised to assist him in the battle, he ordered a retreat, when he was shot through the heart by a musket ball from the enemy and fell lifeless to the earth.

Colonel Brown, according to tradition, was mounted during the engagement on a black horse and fell about one hour after he had left the Fort. With his fine person, his official uniform, and his superior military bearing, he was a conspicuous mark for the muskets of the British Regulars and Indians. He fell in battle on the very day he attained the age of thirty-six years, so that the anniversary of his birth was also the day of his death. The savages, while his life blood was yet oozing warm from his heart, gathered around his body making the place hideous with their exultant yells. They tore off his scalp. They stripped his body of every article of clothing except his ruffled shirt, and then left his body where it had fallen in this bloody encounter.

About forty-five of Colonel Brown's men were slain and scalped. The remainder of his troops, overpowered by numbers, dispersed and sought safety in flight. A few of his men fled towards Fort Rensselaer, a pallisaded stone house, on the south side of the Mohawk river, yet standing in Canajoharie village. Others found place of concealment in the adjoining woods. It is related that six of the men took shelter behind a large rock from which they continued to discharge their muskets at the enemy until all of the men were slain.

We have not sufficient data on which we can form a reliable estimate of the number of Johnson's men that fell during the engagement. We have tradition however, that of the British Regulars a few then fought their last battle; that of the savages a

much larger number then for the last time sounded the hideous war-whoop, and that of the Tories not a few were then doomed to

“ Go down
To the vile earth from whence they sprang,
Unwept, unhonored and unsung.”

After the battle, the army of Johnson was divided into small bands which marched through Stone Arabia during the afternoon engaged in the further destruction of the settlements. Several of them were composed mostly of Tories and Indians, incarnate devils, who delighted in deeds of murder and laughed at the shrieks of the victims of their cruelty. These bands continued their work of devastation and death until they were reunited by Johnson, who then marched them to the river road east of the Garoga Creek.

The enemy were hardly out of sight when four young militiamen, who had escaped the scalping knives and tomahawks of the savages, came out of their lurking-places, took up the body of their fallen commander, and bore it in their arms to Fort Keyser, which had not been assaulted by the enemy. On the next day the bodies of Colonel Brown and the soldiers killed in the engagement, mostly of the New England Levies, were buried in a pit near Fort Paris. Two or three days afterwards the pit was opened, and the body of Colonel Brown was removed to a place of interment about three hundred yards west of the Reformed Dutch Church of Stone Arabia; and there now repose the remains of one of the noblest and bravest defenders of the Mohawk valley.

“New England’s dead! New England’s dead!

On every hill they lie;

* * * * *

Each valley where the battle pour’d

Its red and awful tide,

Beheld the brave New England sword

With slaughter deeply dyed.

Their bones are on the northern hill

And on the southern plain;

By brook and river, lake and rill

And by the roaring main.”

It may be supposed here that Colonel Brown did not exercise a proper degree of caution while marching down towards the Mohawk river to attack the enemy, and was therefore ambuscaded by the Indians, as was the imperious Braddock near the Fords of the Monongahela, or as was the brave and heroic Herkimer at the Battle of Oriskany. The wily Indians, who thought nothing properly done, unless done by stratagem; whose art of war consisted chiefly of the "art of surprise," whose crafty spirits forbade them from engaging in open warfare with an opposing force, and who regarded the scalp as their most valuable trophy, in great wariness had lain in ambush for the detachment of Colonel Brown. It would hardly be proper at this late day, with the somewhat conflicting statements of the survivors of this engagement, and when we have to rely so much on tradition, to employ words of censure against Colonel Brown for his conduct on the morning of the 19th October. His movements hitherto had been characterized by good judgment and a commendable degree of circumspectness. His march after sallying forth from Fort Paris was through a section of country yet densely covered with woods, passing through which he would be greatly exposed to the perils of ambuscade.

GENERAL VAN RENSSELAER'S DILATORY MOVEMENTS.

He had every reason to believe that General Van Rensselaer would be present, as promised, with his forces and fall upon the rear of the enemy. But General Van Rensselaer, for some cause that has never yet been explained, failed to come up to the support of Colonel Brown, and it is quite obvious that he was not like the gallant Hotspur, impatient for the fight. Early in the evening of the 18th October, he was probably not more than *nine*, and certainly not more than *fifteen* miles from the enemy's encampment. He had a force about double that of the enemy, and as the enemy's force did not move during the night of the 18th, General Van Rensselaer could easily have overtaken the invaders before they reached the battle-field. A competent, a prompt and an intrepid

commander would have done so, and thus averted the fall of Brown and the loss of a part of his heroic band. This was the concurrent opinion, so far as known, of the survivors of the battle. But this commander, instead of advancing with all due promptness to the relief of Colonel Brown, moved along tardily in the direction of the enemy's forces and arrived at Canajoharie, nearly opposite to, and about two miles distant from the battle-ground, while the shrill war cry of the savages engaged in deeds of blood could yet be heard, and while the hills of Palatine were yet reverberating with the roar of musketry. It does not appear that General Van Rensselaer made any effort during the morning of the 19th to cross over to the north side of the Mohawk with his troops, but he *succeeded*, according to several accounts, in reaching Fort Plain, three miles west of Canajoharie, in time to accept an invitation to dine with a military friend. If we may charitably suppose that he purposed, on the morning of the engagement, to move with all due speed to the support of Colonel Brown, yet it is certain he "made haste slowly." It is due, however, to the memory of General Van Rensselaer to state that at a court of inquiry, held at Albany on the 12th March, 1781, he was exonerated from all blame for his conduct on the 19th day of October, 1780. But that court, like all other earthly tribunals, was by no means infallible, and its decision was not only non-concurred in by a majority of his cotemporaries, but has since been completely reversed by the judgment of posterity.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

Colonel Brown had a noble person, was an accomplished scholar, fond of elegant literature, and gifted with talents of a high order. He was pure in his morals, winning in his address, and greatly respected and beloved by the officers of the American army. One of his most attached friends was the lamented Montgomery. Having engaged early in life in the service of his country, at his country's call he was ready to march to battle and to death. He was as true a patriot as ever raised his voice, and as intrepid a soldier

as ever drew his sword in the defense of liberty. He did not live to see the united colonies enrolled among the free and independent nations of the earth, but he knew much of American prowess, for he had been in the storm and tempest of battle, and never doubted the final triumph of the American arms. He had an active mind, a chivalric nature, and a passionate fondness for adventurous enterprises. His remarkable geniality of disposition often led him to indulge in pleasantries, and he was inclined to be very observant of whatever in this world was rare and peculiar.

Lossing in his *Field Book of the Revolution* relates the following occurrence: "While on his way to the Mohawk river, Colonel Brown called on Ann Lee, the founder of the sect of American Shakers, and told her by way of pleasantry that on his return he would join her society. A fortnight after he fell in battle two members of the society waited on his widow, and told her that her husband in spirit had joined mother Ann; and that he had given express directions for her to become a member of the society. But his widow was not to be duped by their representations, and bade them begone." If Colonel Brown really had the interview referred to with mother Ann, how little was he then aware that he was so soon to be numbered with the martyr-heroes of the Mohawk Valley.

MONUMENT TO COLONEL BROWN.

On the 19th day of October, 1836, fifty-six years after the death of Colonel Brown a monument was erected by filial piety over his remains, which, (as already stated), were deposited a few days after the battle in a place of interment a little west of the Reformed Dutch Church of Stone Arabia. A son of Colonel Brown, (Henry Brown), then sheriff of Berkshire County, Massachusetts, a gentleman of dignified presence, and said to bear a strong personal resemblance to his father, was present on the occasion, but died soon afterwards, leaving to a large circle of relatives and friends an honorable record and an unsullied name.

The monument bears the following inscription :

"IN MEMORY OF COL. JOHN BROWN,
WHO WAS KILLED IN BATTLE ON THE 19TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1780,
AT PALATINE, IN THE COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY.
AGED 36."

After the ceremony of raising the monument, a sermon was preached by the Reverend Abraham N. Van Horne, of Caughnawaga. And very appropriately was this aged and respected clergyman called at this time to officiate, for he had conducted the religious services (from 1795 to 1832), in the Stone Church at that place, the same venerable structure in which Colonel Brown was a worshipper when a practicing lawyer in this valley. The sermon was followed by an address from him, who then spoke (as he this evening, after the elapse of so many years, again speaks) of the memorable events that occurred in the Mohawk valley in the fall of 1780; and your speaker yet well remembers how deep were the emotions of the dutiful son as he stood by the grave of his honored father, and in the exercise of filial love and piety paid to his memory the tributary tear.

The presence of the son of Colonel Brown, and also of a few of the brave volunteers, survivors of the battle of Stone Arabia, added much to the interest of the occasion. These volunteers were then octogenarians, or what is more probable, each of them had then attained an age exceeding that of four score years.

They never spoke of their former commander, but with feelings of deep emotion. His manly and soldierly bearing; his uniform kindness to his men, and his words of patriotic cheer as they were about to march against the invaders, were to them ever welcome themes in their declining years, and seemed to be ever fresh in their memories.

I trust it will be pardonable in me in this connection to present a few passages from the address (already referred to) delivered on the occasion of the erection of the monument to Colonel Brown. "I now see before me a little remnant of those intrepid spirits who

fought in the memorable engagement of October 19th, 1780. Fifty-six years ago this day, led on by your gallant commander, you battled with greatly superior numbers, consisting of British Regulars, loyalists and savages.

"Venerable patriots! We bid you welcome here this day. In the name of our country, we thank you for the services you rendered her in the darkest days of the Revolution. Be assured they will be held in grateful remembrance while the Mohawk shall continue to wind its course through yonder rich and fertile valley. They will be the theme of praise, long after the marble erected this day to the memory of your brave commander, shall have crumbled to dust. Look! look around you! The field! the field is before us on which the heroic Brown poured out his life blood in the defense of his country's liberties. You fought by his side. You saw him as he fell in battle with his face to the foe. You bore his bleeding and lifeless body from the battle field. With gentle hands, and sorrowing hearts you committed his remains to the earth and

"Carved not a line and raised not a stone,
But left him alone in his glory."

At the Berkshire jubilee, held at Pittsfield, August 23, 1844, Governor Briggs, of Massachusetts, in referring to Colonel Brown, said: "You know the history of John Brown. He sleeps at Stone Arabia where he fell in that murderous attack of the Indians upon the Mohawk. And he sleeps not there alone. Many a Berkshire boy fell with him. From our little sister town of Lanesborough three of her sons perished in that bloody conflict. Many a Berkshire mother's heart sunk within her at the news of that day's work."

CONCLUSION.

In bringing this imperfect account of the civil and military career of Colonel Brown to a close, I may add very briefly:

The beautiful and magnificent valley of the Mohawk is well known historic ground, for its battle fields have been signalized by martial achievements, that have conferred lasting renown upon the country. Its soil has been baptized with the blood, and consecrated by the ashes of Revolutionary patriots, among whom, Colonel Brown deserves conspicuous mention. The citizens of this valley will ever delight to do honor to his memory, and the sad story of his death on the battle field of Stone Arabia, will never be told without awakening in their bosoms greater love for their native land, and for the institutions of their fathers. They will ever speak gratefully of him who at the time of our country's tribulation left his home in New England, to engage in deadly strife with savages along the Mohawk, and fell while nobly battling in the cause of liberty.

“ Ah ! never shall the land forget,
How gushed the life blood of her brave;
Gushed warm with hope and courage yet
Upon the soil they fought to save.”

COL. MARINUS WILLET.

THE HERO OF MOHAWK VALLEY.

AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE
Oneida Historical Society.

BY DANIEL E. WAGER.



UTICA, N. Y.
PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY,
By THE UTICA HERALD PUBLISHING COMPANY.

1891.

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ONEIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Standing Committees Appointed — Relics to be Sent to the World's Fair.

A regular meeting of the Oneida historical society was held last evening at its room, in the city library building, with a fair attendance.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Charles W. Hutchinson at 7:45.

A list of the donations to the society, which included a large number of books and pamphlets, was next read, and a vote of thanks was extended to the donors.

A communication was presented, in which Thomas L. Benham offered to contribute \$1,000 toward the new building for the society.

General C. W. Darling said: A communication is before us, indicating that the officials at Chicago in charge of arrangements for the world's fair desire information as to the prehistoric and Indian relics which have been found in the Mohawk valley and in other parts of central New York. It is in our power to furnish the committee with some valuable information on this subject, and also to loan it numerous Indian relics in the possession of residents and corresponding members of the Oneida historical society.

It was decided to furnish the information and loan the relics.

The following standing committees for 1891 were announced:

Finance—C. W. Hutchinson ex-officio, P. V. Rogers, William M. White, R. S. Williams.

Library—Rev. Daniel Ballou, P. C. J. De Angelis, John E. Brandegee.

Donations—Hon. James S. Sherman, E. Prentiss Bailey, Thomas L. Benham.

Addresses—Rev. Dana W. Bigelow, Dr. William H. Watson, N. Curtis White.

Publications of Society—Alexander Seward, Joseph R. Swan, Rees G. Williams.

Geological and Natural History—Rev. Albert P. Brigham, Colonel Edward Cantwell, Theodore Deecke.

Biographical and Material—Dr. M. M. Bagg, George C. Sawyer, Thomas F. Baker.

Membership—General Charles W. Darling, Donald McIntyre, Dr. Smith Baker, Statistics—Hon. Alexander T. Goodwin, Nicholas E. Kernan, Dr. G. Alder Blumer.

Oriskany, Fort Schuyler and Whites-town Monuments—Alexander Seward, Charles W. Hutchinson, Henry Hulburt, William M. White, W. Stewart Walcott.

Early Utica Publications—Henry Harlburt, Dr. M. M. Bagg, George Austin Clark.

The committee on building was discharged, and the following new one was appointed: William M. White, C. W. Darling, H. D. Pixley, Daniel Batchelor, H. J. Wood.

The committee reported in favor of amending article XVI of the constitution, so that the day of meeting shall be on the second Tuesday of each month. The report was accepted and adopted.

Upon motion of Mr. Seward, the by-laws were so amended that the hour of meeting shall be 4 P. M. instead of 7. This amendment was adopted.

Changing the hour of meeting to four in the afternoon is a return to the hour when the society formerly met during its most flourishing period, and when the meetings were most largely attended; when not only members from the city were present, but many from Little Falls, Herkimer, Trenton and other surrounding towns could attend and return to their homes on the evening trains.

Rev. Dana W. Bigelow moved that a series of popular lectures be given under the auspices of the society during the coming Lenten season, the lectures to be upon such subjects as history, literature, popular geology, &c. Adopted.

The names of Rev. R. Fisk of Watertown, corresponding secretary of the Jefferson county historical society, and Professor W. J. Andrews of Chapel Hill, N. C., secretary of the North Carolina historical society, were proposed as corresponding members.

Hon. W. A. Courtenay of Charleston, S. C., was unanimously elected as a corresponding member.

The name of Frank Sumner Swift was proposed as a resident member. Adjourned.

As the constitution and by-laws now stand the next regular meeting will occur Tuesday, February 13, at 4 P. M.

COL. MARINUS WILLETT.

Among the objects and purposes for which the Oneida Historical Society is organized, are the collection and preservation of materials relative to that part of New York formerly known as Tryon county. Within the scope of this organization is the gathering of scant and scattered materials, and weaving them into a narrative relative to the lives of those who have been prominent and foremost in the important and critical period of the existence of the county, and by their valor, patriotism and masterly activity, made the valley of the Mohawk historic ground, and given to it a national importance in the history of the country. Of all the persons who have contributed to this grand result, I think I am safe in saying no one stands out more conspicuously than Col. Marinus Willett. It may be considered a fortunate conclusion that the gathering of materials for a sketch of his life should be no longer postponed, for it is evident that each year's delay lessens the chances and increases the difficulties of obtaining information not already recorded in the well known histories of the times, especially facts which can now be found only in unpublished manuscripts, or in the memory of living witnesses.

In my correspondence and inquiries for facts I luckily ascertained, what is probably known to but a comparatively few, that two sons of Col. Willett are yet alive, the one eighty-six and the other nearly eighty-eight years of age, with bright minds and unclouded intellects, who were able to impart much valuable information concerning their father, which but for their retentive memories and timely aid might have soon passed into hopeless oblivion.

Aside from the "narrative" of Col. Willett, written or dictated mainly, if not entirely by himself after he had attained his seventieth birthday, and published in 1831, the next year after his death, by the elder of the two sons aforementioned, there is no authentic sketch of his life extant. That "narrative" makes no mention of his civil career, which was quite a prominent one in New York, after the close of the revolutionary war, but has reference mainly to some of the more important military events with which he was connected; and even as to those, with the

becoming modesty of a true soldier, but a brief narration is given.

But a few copies of that "narrative" are in existence, and those very difficult to be obtained. The details are too scant and meager to satisfy the longings of those who wish to know more of Col. Willett's life and character—specially those of Tryon county, wherein he achieved his greatest victories, and won his grandest triumphs. So, too, the histories of the stirring times in which Col. Willett lived have not the space to do more than to mention incidentally, or briefly narrate the more prominent events of the stormy period of his life. Hence, it has been no easy matter, though to me a very pleasurable occupation, to glean from the various and widely separated fields of his active labors materials for a paper that will be full and accurate, and do justice to his merits and memory, and worthy of preservation in the archives of this society.

Thomas Willett, the first one of that family name who crossed the Atlantic to make his home in this western world, was born in England, where his father and grandfather had been ministers of the gospel. He came in the good ship *Lion* in 1632, when he was but twenty-two years of age, and settled in the Plymouth colony, not far from the State line of Rhode Island. The records in that colony frequently mention his name, and furnish evidence that he became a person of wealth and prominence. In his young manhood he was a surveyor of highways, captain of a military company, and held other similar positions. He engaged in mercantile pursuits; was interested in sea-going vessels; owned large tracts of land, one of which was formed into a township by the name of "Swansea." In 1650, while a merchant of Plymouth, he was appointed by Peter Stuyvesant, then the Dutch colonial executive of New York, one of the boundary commissioners, to settle the disputed line between the English and Dutch. That line was adjusted, and has passed into history as the "Hartford boundary treaty of 1650." After the English came into power in New York, Capt. Willett was appointed one of the councilors of that colony, and held that office from 1665 to 1673. In 1667 he was appointed by the English governor, Richard Nichols, the first English mayor of New York, from which it would appear he had, in the meantime, become a resident of the metropolis. When the Dutch, in 1673, regained ascendancy in New York, the property of Thomas Willett was confiscated; he died the next year, at the age

sixty-four years, and his remains were buried at East Providence, in Rhode Island. At page 59 of Lossing's history of the Empire State, a *fac simile* of Thomas Willett's signature can be found. He was the great grandfather of Col. Marinus Willett, whose name and fame are so closely and dearly associated with the history of Tryon county, during the stormy period of the revolutionary struggle.

Edward Willett (the father of Col. Willett,) was a Quaker and a farmer of moderate means, near Jamaica, on Long Island; at that homestead Marinus was born on July 31, 1740, (old style.) He was the second son and child in a family of thirteen children—the same number that was born unto his great grandfather aforementioned. That father died in 1794, at the age of ninety-four years, and, although he belonged to a denomination that was on principle, opposed to war, yet he was destined to see two of his sons, before they were eighteen, enter the military service of their country, and the one to become a prominent leader; the other to be a lieutenant on an English privateer, and the vessel on which he was engaged swept away in a hurricane in the French war of 1758, and all on board lost at sea. Marinus, until he was nearly eighteen years of age, pursued the quiet and peaceful pursuits of a farm life at his father's homestead. About that period of his life, he was moved by a spirit of self-reliance to leave the paternal roof and provide for himself. With a resolute will and a determined spirit, and with only twenty shillings in his pocket, he crossed over to New York to seek in that great city employment, and, if possible, make his fortune. It was about the time of the French war of 1758, when the colonists were greatly excited by reason of raising of troops, and the activity of the contending forces. In the early spring of that year, three English expeditions were being fitted out, with a view to attack the French at different points, and drive them out of this country. One of those expeditions, and in which New York took the greatest interest, was under the command of General Abercrombie, and to be led by him from Albany to lakes George and Champlain to attack Fort Ticonderoga, then garrisoned by 4,000 troops under Montcalm, a field marshal of France. Here were to be raised in the vicinity of New York three battalions of 900 men each, to be under the command of Col. Oliver DeLancey, a brother of the acting governor of New York.

It required no great effort to raise the requisite number of

troops, for the whole country was in commotion, and the people running over with enthusiasm. Young Willett caught the prevailing spirit of the times and, following his own ambition and the example of others, he enlisted in the army and raised a company of soldiers on Long Island among his neighbors and acquaintances. Through the influence of friends, he was appointed second lieutenant of his company, and, although not then eighteen years old, he was as full of patriotism and spirit as those of maturer years. In his "narrative" is the following description of the uniform he wore on receiving his commission as lieutenant, viz.: "Green coat trimmed with silver twist; white under clothes and black gaiters, a cocked hat with large black cockade of silk ribbon, with silver button and loop." The three battalions were raised, and the first week in May the troops left New York in sloops, ascended the Hudson to Albany, thence marched overland to Schenectady, and for two weeks were employed in patrolling the Mohawk to watch the settlements and prevent an attack from the French, if one should be made in that quarter. Orders then came to march to Lake George, where they arrived the fore part of June, and found that active preparations were there going forward to cross the lake. The last of the month Gen. Abercrombie arrived, but the soul of the expedition and the idol of the army was young Lord Howe, then thirty-four years of age; young Willett has left on record his high appreciation of the ability and soldierly qualities of that gallant officer. Soon after daybreak on Sunday, July 5th, the whole army, 16,000 strong, embarked in 1,000 boats, to cross Lake George, from its southern extremity, to its northerly shore. The day was bright and clear, the soldiers were clad in their scarlet coats, and as this armament floated upon the glassy surface of this inland sea, accompanied by martial music, while ensigns and banners floated in the breeze and glittered in the sunbeams, it looked more like a holiday occasion than an army going to battle.

At dawn the next morning, the troops landed at the north end of the lake, some four or five miles from Fort Ticonderoga, and while reaching the shore, had a slight skirmish with the occupants of a French outpost at that point, in which a couple of Frenchmen were killed. A few of the Stockbridge tribe of Indians accompanied this expedition, and as soon as they saw the two dead soldiers they rushed forward and secured their scalps. This was young Willett's first experience in witnessing the scalping process, but those scenes became familiar to him later in life. The country

between Lake George and Fort Ticonderoga was covered by a dense forest and tangled morasses; the troops formed in good order, and commenced marching by columns through the woods. Lord Howe led the advance guard, near whom was the regiment in which young Willett marched, moving forward to exposed points of danger and expecting every moment to fall into an ambush or to be met by a strong French force. The eve of battle is always one of breathless anxiety, especially to those who have never been in an engagement or witnessed one. This was Willett's first experience, and he has left an account of his feelings on this occasion; he states that he did not at this time, nor ever subsequently in his life, experience the slightest degree of fear, but on the contrary he was quite elated, and his spirits highly exhilarated as the crisis approached. The troops had not proceeded two miles before an ambush was discovered near where young Willett was marching. A sharp engagement ensued and Lord Howe was soon to the front rallying and cheering his men, when he was struck by a bullet and instantly killed. The French were dispersed, but the sudden death of Howe threw his troops into confusion and disorder. There then seemed to be no leader or any one to issue orders. The troops wandered about following incompetent guides, crossing each other's track, and firing at their own friends, mistaking them for the foe. While thus moving Willett and his companions accidentally fell in with Gen. Abercrombie, who stood under a huge tree, with a large cloak wrapped about him, while two regiments of regular troops were drawn up around his person to guard and protect him from harm. He issued no orders and the troops continued to wander the rest of the day, lost and bewildered in the woods. As night overtook them, they halted and rested until morning; on awaking it was found that most of the men had encamped near the spot where they had landed from the boats the morning before.

It was afternoon before the army was again in motion for Fort Ticonderoga, and when three miles from the fort, they halted and passed another night in the woods. The next day, which was the 8th of July, the army again started on its march for the fort, and about noon was re-enforced by six hundred Indians under the command of Sir William Johnson. But the want of a leader and competent guides had not been supplied. The same confusion, disorder and bewilderment prevailed, and before the troops were aware of it, or knew the danger they were in, they became en-

tangled in a network of fallen trees, and found they were directly under the enemy's breastworks, and exposed to a murderous fire. For four or five hours the battle raged, to the great disadvantage of the British troops, and it was not until sunset the firing ceased, and the latter retired to spend another night in the forest, expecting to renew the attack the next day, before daylight.

The next morning Lieut. Willett was awakened from a sound sleep and told that the army was rapidly making its way to their boats, with a view to recross the lake. About eight that morning the troops re-embarked, and, although there was no enemy near, great confusion and disorder prevailed, and this expedition, which, three days before, came with such pomp and splendor, returned in disgrace, leaving behind it, killed and wounded, some two thousand of its numbers. No doubt Gen. Abercrombie felt much safer when he had put thirty-eight miles of Lake George between himself and Montecalm.

In that expedition were two other persons prominent in the history of New York, and who have been more or less connected with affairs in Tryon county. The one was Gen. Philip Schuyler, whose name was given to Fort Stanwix during a portion of the revolutionary war; the other, Gen. John Bradstreet, a prominent officer in the colonial service, and who was, for years, part owner of Cosby's manor, which includes the site of Utica, and whose widow, by another marriage, was grandmother to that Martha Bradstreet who made her name famous, not only by reason of her legal and other abilities, but by the long, tedious and expensive litigation which, over half a century ago, she inflicted upon Uticans and others, regarding their land titles. Gen. Bradstreet was but a major in that expedition, yet he burned with indignation because of its shameful failure. At a council of war held at the head of the lake the very evening the troops returned from Ticonderoga, he urged the adoption of measures that would tend to wipe out or relieve the disgraceful blunder. He suggested an expedition against Fort Frontenac (now Kingston,) and offered to lead it. Some looked upon such an undertaking as wild and chimerical, and its successful execution improbable, for it was considered a strong fortress for those times, well supplied with men, cannon and ammunition; but Bradstreet urged his offer with so much earnestness that Gen. Abercrombie at last reluctantly consented to commission him to go and take with him three thousand troops. Among the number was young Willett and the regiment to which

he belonged. The destination was kept secret from all but the leading officers. They started the next day and were moved with greatest rapidity to Albany, thence to the Mohawk, and they "fairly flew," as it is said, up the river in boats, to the "Oncida carrying place," now the site of Rome. And here let me add, by way of parenthesis, that besides Schuyler and Willett, who accompanied Gen. Bradstreet to Fort Frontenac, were many others who subsequently became noted in the history of this country. Among them Nathaniel Woodhull, then a major, subsequently a general in the revolutionary army, and the first president of the provincial congress. Horatio Gates, then a captain and in the revolutionary war a brigadier general, and who captured Burgoyne and his army; Col. Charles Clinton, then stationed at Fort Herkimer, and near seventy years of age; also his two sons, James Clinton, then a captain and twenty-two years old, afterward a general, and his brother George, then nineteen years old, and afterwards for twenty-five years governor of New York; the great war governor of the infant State. Although Gen. Bradstreet moved his men up the valley with great celerity, yet it took two weeks' time for the men to pole the boats up the river to the "carrying place." On reaching this portage, Gen. John Stanwix was found with six thousand troops, having been previously ordered there to erect a formidable fort in the place of Forts Williams, Craven and Bull, destroyed two years before. The first two named forts had stood upon the banks of the Mohawk, below the bend of that river, a little further down stream than the present railroad bridge. Fort Bull was upon the lower landing of Wood Creek, some two or three miles to the westward of Forts Craven and Williams. Across this portage Bradstreet transported his men, boats and munitions of war and stores. A dam was constructed across Wood Creek, at the upper landing near the late United States arsenal, to raise the water of that stream, to aid in floating the loaded boats to Oncida Lake. Two weeks' time was occupied in making these preparations, and in removing the fallen trees and other obstructions from the creek. These movements indicated to the troops the direction of the expedition. The troops started August 14 and in six days Oswego was reached; after resting there for a few hours to repair the boats, inspect the arms and accoutrements, the troops were again on their way passing over the lake, but keeping near shore. On the third day after leaving Oswego, the troops landed on the evening of the 25th, about two miles from the fort,

and the next day commenced active preparations to take it by storm. The fort was a square one, fifteen feet high, built of stone and nearly three-fourths of a mile in circumference, and well protected by cannon; the garrison had no intimation of the approach of an enemy, until the British troops appeared before the fortress. Breastworks were erected to protect the assailants, and Willett was much of the time in exposed points of danger, and one entire night he and his men were under a constant fire of grape shot and musketry. The siege was continued for three days, and on the 29th of August the garrison surrendered; the capture included sixty cannon, sixteen mortars, a vast amount of small arms, a large quantity of powder and balls of all sorts, nine vessels and about one hundred men. The magazine was blown up, the buildings destroyed, and the whole fortress reduced to a heap of rubbish. The captured vessels were used to transport the stores to Oswego, and there burned to the water's edge. The capture of this fort was considered at the time, as one of the greatest blows inflicted upon the French in America, considering the consequences, as that fort was the storehouse from which other forts to the south were supplied. It reflected great credit upon Bradstreet and his men, although it involved incessant toil, great fatigue and hardship, and a great sacrifice of human life. When Oswego Falls (now Fulton) was reached by the troops on their return from Oswego, it took the men three days to drag the boats and stores over that portage of a mile, and so excessive was the labor, and so great the fatigue and exposure of the men in the whole expedition that near one hundred deaths occurred at that point, and when Fort Bull was reached half of the men were unfit for duty. It required four days to transport the boats and stores from Wood Creek across the portage at Rome, to the Mohawk, and by that time the men were completely exhausted. Smith's Colonial History of New York says that five hundred men died and were buried at this "carrying place." The cause of these deaths and sickness, is attributed to the stagnant water of Wood Creek, the exposure and fatigue of the men, and the haste in cooking the food.

The expedition on its return, reached Fort Stanwix September 10, and that very night young Willett was taken ill and confined to his tent until November by a dangerous illness. As before stated, that was the season Fort Stanwix was constructed. The work was commenced August 23 and completed November 15, 1758. It was a square work, bounded by what are now Dominick,

Spring and Liberty streets, and was about 20 rods westerly from the Mohawk. It was surrounded by a deep, wide ditch, with long pickets in the center, sharpened at the top, and a row of horizontal ones projected from the embankment. It was among the most formidable structures of the times and cost the British government over \$266,000.

After Lieutenant Willett partially recovered his health and strength he was put in a boat and taken down the river to Schenectady; thence overland to Albany where he remained until December 1. The ice in the meantime having left the Hudson, he went down that river in a boat and reached New York the 7th of December, just seven months to a day from the time he had left that city in such good health and high spirits to join Abercrombie's expedition. His feeble health and the wishes of his friends prevented his taking any further part in the war. In fact, that war was near its close, for the success of the British arms the next year, the taking of Quebec in September, witnessed the culminating genius and crowning glory of Wolfe, and the valor and heroic death of Montcalm, and practically put an end to French domination on this continent.

I have not learned the occupation of Col. Willett between the close of the French war and the commencement of the revolution. The eldest son writes me, that he never heard it mentioned, but that when he was a lad, a piece of household furniture was pointed out in the dwelling as the workmanship of his father, which leads to the inference that Col. Willett might have been a cabinetmaker in his early manhood; but nothing further has been ascertained. Certain it is, however, that in whatever vocations he engaged, he was always abreast of the times and kept himself well informed as to politics and the current events of the day, and was ever found arrayed on the side of freedom and the rights of man.

In 1765 occurred the popular and universal outbreak in the colonies, caused by the threatened enforcement of the odious stamp act; but for the timely repeal of that law, the revolutionary conflict in the colonies, might have been precipitated ten years sooner than it was. In October, 1765, while a colonial congress of delegates was in session in New York city, a vessel arrived in port, bringing the obnoxious stamps. The law was to go into effect November 1. The stamps were unloaded from the vessel and hurriedly conveyed to and lodged in the fort in that city, then

garrisoned by British troops. A body of men called "The Sons of Liberty" were organized and among the prominent leaders, was young Marinus Willett, then twenty-five years old. When it was known the stamps had arrived and lodged in the fort, the whole city was in commotion; a large and tumultuous assemblage convened in the present city hall park, a gallows was erected and on it was hung an effigy of Gov. Colden. Another effigy of the governor was borne by an excited and exasperated crowd through the streets to the gate of the fort where soldiers were drawn up on the ramparts, but dare not fire. The stamps were demanded of the governor who refused to give them up, whereupon his carriage was seized, his effigy set upon it, the crowd marched to the battery, spiked the cannon and there burned carriage and effigy to ashes. The house of Major James, the commander of the royal artillery was attacked and gutted and the contents destroyed by fire and the colors of the regiment carried off by the populace. The feeling was so intense and the excitement so great, the collector appointed to sell the stamps was afraid to act and resigned and no one dare use them. The people were appeased by assurances that the stamps should not be used, and in four months that law was repealed, never having been executed in any of the colonies. It was in times like these that young Willett took his first lessons in patriotism and learned to vindicate the rights of the people and prepared himself as an important factor in the revolutionary struggle which achieved American independence.

On Sunday, April 23, 1775, rumors spread through the city of New York that there had been a conflict between the people and the troops the Wednesday before at Lexington and Concord. The gale that carried that news over the land was but the slightest breeze of the approaching spirit of the storm. The feeling which incited brave old Gen. Putnam to unhitch his team in the field where he was at work, leave the plow in the furrow, mount his horse and tear along the highway for one hundred miles to beleaguere Boston was the same which then spread itself into every hamlet throughout this broad land. The people of New York city, as if moved by one impulse, proceeded to the arsenal, forced open the door, took possession of six hundred muskets with bayonets and cartridge boxes and balls, and distributed these arms among the most active of the citizens; they formed themselves into a committee of safety and assumed the control of the city government. They took possession of the custom house and of all



the public stores, cut loose two transports at the wharf, emptied the vessels laden with provisions for Boston of their contents, seized the powder house, attempted to take possession of the magazine, published a declaration that no vessel should leave the fort for Boston; formed themselves into military companies and paraded the streets, but apparently with no definite object in view.

In the midst of this general commotion orders came from the British commander for the troops to proceed to Boston. The execution of this order could easily have been prevented, but for the timidity of some who were afraid to provoke a collision. The citizens held a meeting and agreed to allow the soldiers to depart with their own arms and accoutrements, but nothing else. One fine morning news spread like wildfire that the troops were embarking and were carrying off cartloads of chests of arms. Young Willett, who was one of the most active of the patriots, started out in one direction to notify his friends what was going on; while crossing Broad street he noticed the troops with five cartloads of arms coming down that street; without waiting for aid or advice he proceeded up the street, met the carts, took the foremost horse by the head. This brought things to a halt, and the major in command came forward to learn the cause; soon a crowd collected, and some of the committee opposed, and some approved the course of young Willett. Being encouraged and advised by his friends he mounted a cart, made a brief, stirring speech which was loudly cheered. He then turned the head of the forward horse into another street, those behind followed, and all of the carts were driven to a vacant lot and a ball alley on John street, and thus the arms were prevented from leaving the city. Those arms and those taken possession of when the news of the battle of Lexington first reached the city were used by the first troops raised in New York under the orders of Congress. The troops meeting with no other obstacle marched to the wharf and embarked for Boston amid the hisses of an excited people. This prompt and decided action of the citizens struck dismay to the hearts of the adherents of the crown, gave them a foretaste of what might be expected, and at the same time, made the recruiting of troops for the colonies a much easier task.

By order of Congress, the colony of New York was required to raise four regiments, each to consist of ten companies and each company to be composed of some seventy-two men, making about 3,000 troops to be raised in New York. Of this number New

York city was to raise one regiment. Each regiment was to be commanded by a colonel, a lieutenant-colonel and a major. Alexander McDougall was colonel of the first New York regiment, and young Willett was appointed second captain. He received his appointment June 28, 1775. He was then in his thirty-fifth year, and as he says in his "narrative," his health, strength, buoyancy of spirit and enthusiasm were his principal qualifications. His company was one of the first recruited and ready to take the field. Colonel Ethan Allen, the May preceding, had captured Ticonderoga in "the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress," and this was considered the key to the gateway of Canada, and had much to do in turning the attention of Congress, Washington, General Schuyler and others in this direction, as the proper one for the invasion of that province. There was a garrison of some 500 men at St. Johns on this route to Canada; another force at Chambles, lower down the river, and some 300 Tories and Indians at Montreal, which constituted about all of the effective troops of the British in Canada. It was believed all of these places and troops could be captured and Canada thereby prevailed upon to link its fortunes with the thirteen colonies. On the 8th of August, 1775, Willett and his men took passage in a sloop up the Hudson, and reached Albany after a passage of four days. They were armed with the muskets which Willett had taken from the enemy, as before stated. At Albany this company was joined by three others, and there reviewed by General Montgomery, who was to accompany them. Their destination was Canada, via Lake Champlain. They reached Ticonderoga in the course of two weeks, and were on the same grounds occupied by Willett when he was in the first battle seventeen years before. On the 29th of August 1,000 troops under Gen. Montgomery embarked in boats, proceeded down the lake, and on the 4th of September they were joined at Ile Aux Noix, at the foot of the lake, by Gen. Schuyler. The 6th they proceeded to St. Johns, but found it too well fortified to take it by storm, with the small force and light guns of the Americans, and the next day they returned to the island. On the 10th of the month Gen. Montgomery, with 1,000 men, again proceeded to St. Johns, and landed just at dusk two miles from the fort. A detachment of 500 men, with which was young Willett, was sent below the fort to cut off the supplies of the enemy. This expedition, by reason of the bad conduct of the colonel in command,

was unsuccessful, and again the troops returned to the island. Here they remained for a week.

When the American force was augmented to 2,000 men, and had received an additional supply of ammunition and larger guns, the army again embarked for St. Johns, under Gen. Montgomery, and late in the day landed at the place where the troops first disembarked. Again a detachment of 500 men was ordered below the fort, and this time Gen. Montgomery accompanied it, and it was successful in taking position and planting batteries. The siege slowly continued, large guns arrived and the garrison was severely annoyed. There was a fort at Chamblee, twelve miles from St. Johns, lower down the River Sorel, and on the route to Canada, garrisoned by about 170 men. A detachment was sent to lay siege to that fort, and in less than two days, on October 18th, it surrendered with 168 men, seventeen cannon, six tons of powder. The colors of the seventh regiment were also captured and sent as a trophy to Congress. This capture was of great benefit to the besiegers of St. Johns. Nevertheless that garrison held out bravely, but on the 3d of November, after a siege of fifty days, that fort surrendered, and the prize was 500 regular troops and 100 Canadians (among whom were some of the French gentry) and a large quantity of military stores. This was indeed a great success and was received by Congress and the country with feelings of delight; and well it might, for the troops were raw and undisciplined, the army supplies scant, the weather cold and rainy, the grounds where the troops encamped damp and unhealthy, yet, in spite of all, a great victory was achieved. Capt. Willett was charged with the duty of escorting the prisoners to Ticonderoga, while Gen. Montgomery pushed on with an armed force to Montreal. As soon as the prisoners were safely placed in Fort Ticonderoga, Willett hastened to Montreal, and arrived there November 22, ten days after Montgomery had reached that place. The latter ordered Capt. Willett to return to St. Johns and take the command of that fort. This showed the high appreciation in which he was held by his superior officer. Willett remained at St. Johns until in January, 1776, when the term of the enlistment of his troops having expired, he was relieved and again went to Montreal. On the 18th of February, by order of Gen. Montgomery, he left that place for Albany in charge of British officers and their families, and reached the latter place the last of the month. On the 1st of March he set out on horseback for New York, where he arrived the 5th.

The war having now assumed a severer aspect than was supposed by many it would, it was found necessary to raise more troops with longer terms of enlistment. New York was required in 1776 to raise four battalions. Of the Third New York Regiment thus raised, Peter Gansevoort of Albany was appointed colonel and Marinus Willett lieutenant-colonel. The latter received his appointment the latter part of November, 1776, and with his appointment came orders to repair to Fishkill on the Hudson to recruit for his regiment. He was diligently employed there all winter in recruiting, drilling and clothing the men, and getting ready for the coming campaign. At the opening of the spring of 1777, Col. Willitt was ordered to take charge of Fort Constitution, opposite what is now West Point. It was so called because of the measures then being taken to form a state constitution for New York. During the whole war of the revolution it was a favorite scheme of the British government to obtain control of the Hudson, establish a chain of forts along that river and keep open a communication between New York city and Canada. As soon as the ice was out of the Hudson, about the middle of March, 1777, sloops loaded with troops, started up that river to capture Forts Clinton and Montgomery and Peekskill. A body of troops landed at the latter place, set fire to the wharf and buildings, and made such a formidable demonstration as to cause the American commander at that port (Col. McDougall) to move the army stores to a place of safety, and his troops to the passes in the highlands, and to send to Col. Willett for help. The express reached the latter on Sunday, March 23, while Col. Willett's men were out parading for a field review. The troops hurried to Peekskill and took post on an eminence that commanded a full view of the surrounding country. The practiced eye of Col. Willett noticed that a detachment of 100 men was separated from the main army of the enemy by a ravine, and he conceived the project of cutting them off and capturing the detachment; he took a circuitous route, crossed fences and other obstructions, but, as it was near dark and the detachment fled so precipitately to the shipping, he was unsuccessful. He captured, however, baggage, which had been left, consisting of blankets and cloaks; a blue camlet cloak, captured on that occasion, served afterwards to make the blue stripes to the flag that was first hoisted over Fort Stanwix, as will be hereafter narrated. The enemy were thoroughly frightened and took refuge on board of the ships, weighed anchor, and by the light of the moon, the whole

squadron swept down the Hudson back to the city. Col. Willett returned to Fort Constitution and there remained until May 18, when he was ordered to Fort Stanwix. He set out with his regiment in three sloops, and, in three days, reached Albany, thence up the Mohawk in boats, and arrived at Fort Stanwix May 29, nineteen years later than his first visit under Gen. Bradstreet. Col. Gansevoort had preceded him in the arrival at that fort, and was chief in command. In 1776 Washington saw the importance of Fort Stanwix, and wrote to Gen. Schuyler, in command of the northern frontier of New York, that Fort Stanwix should be put in repair and in a state of defense, but it seems, however, that but little was done. It was known early in the year 1777 that the British plan of the campaign for that year was for an army to enter New York via Lake Champlain, proceed to Albany, and to meet Gen. Howe, who was to go up the Hudson with his forces. It was to carry out that plan and to capture the forts on the Hudson that the incursion was made to Peekskill in March, 1777, as before stated. It was a part of the same plan for another force to proceed from Canada, via Oswego, Oneida Lake and Wood Creek, capture and garrison Fort Stanwix, proceed down the Mohawk, overrun the settlements of the valley and join the other British troops at Albany. This plan, if successful, would have been the death knell of American independence, as it would have separated the New England colonies from the other provinces and put the settlements of Tryon county at the mercy of the Tories.

When Col. Willett reached Fort Stanwix he found it was greatly out of repair; the ditch was filled up, the embankment crumbled away, the pickets had rotted down and the barracks and magazine gone to ruin. It is hardly worth while to relate in this connection the difficulties attending the repairs, the inefficiency, if not the culpable heedlessness, of the engineer in charge, a detection of his blunders by Col. Willett, and his arrest and dismissal to Gen. Schuyler at Albany, and the necessity of doing over again much of the work, and how it was not completed when the enemy arrived; all of these have been pretty fully narrated in the general, as well as the local history of the times. About five P. M., August 2, batteaux loaded with supplies for the garrison and guarded by 200 men, reached the landing place on the Mohawk from down the river, and barely had time to get within the fort when an advance guard of sixty men of the enemy appeared in the skirt of the woods from the direction of Fort Bull. In fact, the captain had

carelessly lingered behind and was taken prisoner. The garrison, by this 200 addition, consisted of 750 men, with six weeks' provision, but a scanty supply of powder—enough for six weeks if only nine cannon were fired each day. For a flag, this fort was up to that time without one. The garrison heard, doubtless, in due time, in this far-off wilderness, the kind of flag Congress, on the 14th of June preceding, had adopted as the emblem of the nation that was to be, and, as necessity is the mother of invention, the troops devised the means for making a flag of the regulation style. For the white stripes shirts were cut up; to make the blue, the camlet cloak was used, captured by Col. Willett in March before, and for the red, old garments found by the garrison were improvised; some authorities say, the red was made from a petticoat, captured at the time of the camlet cloak. The army that was to come by way of Oswego, was under the command of Gen. St. Leger, of the regular army, and under him was Sir John Johnson in command of the Tories, and Brant in command of the savages—about 1,000 in all. That force started from Montreal about June 21st, proceeded down the St. Lawrence, across Lake Ontario to Oswego, where it arrived about July 25th, and left the 28th for Oneida Lake, reaching the mouth of Wood Creek August 1st. After the troops left Oswego, their progress was closely watched and daily reported to the garrison, by the friendly Oneidas, so that Col. Willett knew to a day when the army would arrive at Fort Stanwix. An advance guard of sixty men under Lieut. Bird were sent forward by St. Leger, to formally invest the fort, and that detachment arrived a little after five in the afternoon as heretofore stated. On Sunday, August 3d, the remainder of the enemy reached the upper landing on Wood Creek (the site of the late United States arsenal) and there formed into line, to march with pomp and display over the intervening space to the fort. The day was bright and clear, and the pathway over the portage of sufficient width to enable the troops to show off to good advantage. The garrison were purposely paraded on the ramparts, not to fire, but to view the class of troops they were to meet, and to observe their movements and *count their numbers*. Not a gun was fired on either side. The garrison simply watched and *counted*. The martial music was first heard, next came in sight the scarlet uniforms, and then the burnished firearms of the regular soldiers, the glittering tomahawks of the savages, and the wild feathers waving and tossing on their head gear. As they advanced the regular troops

marched with precision and stately tread, deploying to the right and left, while the Indians spread out on the flanks, and with yells and war whoops made the forest resound with their reverberations, that drowned the sound of the bugle and the drum. In the midst of all, banners, ensigns and streamers floated to the breeze, and the whole display was intended to strike terror to the hearts of the garrison, but it had the opposite effect. They comprehended the situation, and saw the kind of foe they were to meet. St. Leger placed a portion of his troops on the site of the late United States arsenal; another portion, with cannon and mortar with which to shell the fort, upon the rise of ground now occupied by St. Peter's Church. Sir John Johnson and his Tories were stationed southeast of the fort, near the bend of the Mohawk, below where the railroad bridge now crosses that stream, and out of the reach of the guns of the fort, while the Indian camps were in the woods near the site now occupied by the railroad freight house; the river a few rods easterly, prevented the garrison from escaping in that direction. It will thus be seen how closely the investure was made, and how snugly the garrison was cooped up within the fortifications. Very early on the morning of Monday, August 4, a brisk fire from the rifles of the Indians was commenced, which annoyed the garrison in their work on the parapets. The greater part of the 5th was occupied by both sides in firing at each other. Soon after dark of that evening the Indians spread themselves through the woods, completely encircling the fort, and almost the entire night kept up terrific yelling, so as to keep the garrison awake and on the *qui vive*. Early on the morning of Wednesday, August 6, it was noticed that the Indian and Sir John Johnson's camps were nearly deserted, and that the enemy were stealthily stealing along the edge of the woods, on the south side of the river, toward Oriskany. The reason for this movement was not guessed by the garrison, for the Americans were not then aware that Herkimer was coming to their relief. About eleven in the forenoon two men sent by Gen. Herkimer two days before, succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the besiegers and in getting into the fort. They brought the news of Gen. Herkimer's approach, and it was then evident that the Indians and Tories had gone down the river to intercept the coming troops. Then it was that Gen. Gansevoort resolved to make a sortie and attack the two camps that had been partially deserted. The men within the fort were paraded in a square and the intelligence of Herkimer's coming was communicated to them.

Col. Willett, who was to lead the sortie, went down into the esplanade and addressed the men substantially as follows: "Soldiers, you have heard that Gen. Herkimer is on his march to our relief. The commanding officer feels satisfied that the Tories and Queen's rangers have stolen off in the night with Brant and his Mohawks to meet him. The camp of Sir John is therefore weakened. As many of you as feel willing to follow me in an attack upon it, and are not afraid to die for liberty, will shoulder your arms and step out one pace in front." Two hundred men obeyed the impulse almost at the same moment; fifty more with a three pounder were soon added. A rain storm nearly at that instant came up, which delayed the sortie until three p. m., but as soon as the storm ceased the men issued from the sally port at a brisk pace, and rushing down on Sir John Johnson's camp, near the bend of the river, below the present railroad bridge, carried it at the point of the bayonet, drove the enemy into and across the Mohawk at that point, and captured a large amount of army stores and a number of prisoners, among whom was Col. Singleton, who was at the battle of Oriskany a few hours before, but had returned to camp in the meantime. He informed Col. Willett, as the latter states in his "narrative," that Sir John was also in camp, and fled across the river. If this was correct information, Sir John must also have returned from Oriskany, for the reliable accounts show he was in that battle. After Sir John's camp was scattered, Col. Willett turned his attention to the Indian camp, on or near the site of the present railroad freight house, and soon drove the Indians into the woods. When St. Leger, at his camp on the present site of St. Peter's Church, learned of the sortie he hurriedly crossed the Mohawk at that point and followed down stream to where "Factory Village" now is, on the opposite side from the fort, with a view to cut off Col. Willett's return. St. Leger had two brass field pieces, and, partly concealed in a thicket on the east side of the river, he opened a brisk fire on Col. Willett's men, but the latter returned it so effectively that they soon put St. Leger's force to flight and returned to the fort without the loss of a single man. Col. Willett captured twenty-one wagonloads of supplies, with five British flags, all of Sir John's papers, including his orderly book, and also letters from down the valley, which were being sent to the garrison from their friends, and which had been captured from Gen. Herkimer a few hours before, but which the enemy had not opened. The following is what Col. Willett says

in his "narrative" was done on his return to the fort: "The five flags taken from the enemy were hoisted on the flagstaff, under the Continental flag, when all the troops in the garrison, having mounted the parapets, gave three as hearty cheers as perhaps were ever given by the same number of men." That account by Col. Willett himself establishes the fact that a flag of the regulation kind, (as he calls it the Continental flag) as adopted by Congress, was raised on Fort Stanwix as early as August 6, 1777. I have not seen in any historical work that a flag as ordered by Congress was raised within the thirteen colonies prior to that time.

In the afternoon of Thursday, August 7, a white flag from the enemy approached the fort, accompanied by three officers, with a request they might enter with a message from St. Leger. Permission was granted, and, according to custom, they were first blindfolded and then conducted into the dining-room, where the windows were darkened, candles lighted, the table spread with some light refreshments, and they were then received by Col. Gansevoort in the presence of his officers. The bandage was then removed from the eyes of the British officers and the principal speaker (Major Ancram) made known his errand, the purport of which was a demand of the surrender of the fort, accompanied by intimations that if surrendered the prisoners would be treated humanely, but if taken by force St. Leger would not hold himself responsible for the acts of cruelty of the Indians. Col. Willett was deputed to reply in behalf of the garrison and no one had more fire or greater spirit or was better qualified to speak on that occasion. He looked Major Ancram full in the face and with an earnestness and emphasis that admitted of no mistake or equivocation said in substance: "This garrison is committed to our charge and we will take care of it. After you get out of the fort you may turn around and look at its outside, but *never* expect to come in again unless you come a prisoner. I consider the message you have brought a degrading one for a British officer to send and by no means reputable for a British officer to carry. For my own part, I declare that before I would consent to deliver this garrison to such a murdering set as your army, by your own account consists of, I would suffer *my body to be filled with splinters and set on fire*, as you know has at times been practiced by such hordes of women and children killers as belong to your army." These sentiments were re-echoed with applause by all officers present of

the garrison. A cessation of hostilities for three days was agreed upon. As nothing had been heard from down the valley since the battle of Oriskany the garrison was getting uneasy. They needed more ammunition and might soon need provisions. It was discussed within the fort that if Col. Willett, who was very popular in the Tryon County settlements, could show himself there a spirit of enthusiasm would be awakened and they would rally to the relief of the fort. Influenced by these considerations Col. Willett agreed to make the hazardous attempt to reach the people down the river. Accordingly, at ten o'clock at night, Sunday, August 10, he, accompanied by Lieut. Stockwell, a good woodsman, each armed with a spear eight feet long, as his only weapon, with no provisions but crackers and cheese in their pockets and a quart canteen of spirits, no baggage or blankets, stole silently out of the sally port, crossed the river by crawling on a log, and when on the opposite side of the stream, where "Factory Village" now is, it was pitch dark and they in the middle of a thick forest. In rambling about they lost their way and bearings and became alarmed by the barking of a dog not far away. They were near an Indian camp, some of the Indians having taken a position on that side of the river after the sortie of Col. Willett. They stood perfectly still by the side of a large tree, not venturing to move for hours and until the morning star appeared. They then took a northerly course and struck the Mohawk again not far from what is now known as the "Ridge," two miles north of the fort. They kept close to the river, waded in it, and some of the way crossed over from one side to the other, so as to conceal their trail and not be followed. They pursued this course for several hours and then turned easterly to strike the settlements down the river. In those days the Indian path was south of the Mohawk and seldom, if ever, was there traveling in the pathless woods north of that stream; nevertheless when night came those two dare not strike a fire or a light, lest it might attract attention of prowling Indians; and so they camped in the thicket, without fire, light, blankets or covering. At peep of day they were on their feet, although both were tired, lame and sore for the day's traveling, and night's chill, and Col. Willett's rheumatism, yet they kept on their journey, but steered more southerly, and about nine in the morning they struck a heavy windfall where were growing large patches of ripe blackberries. From this luscious fruit and the crackers and cheese and spirits the two had a hearty breakfast. The sun and points of

compass were observed and without other guides they struck Fort Dayton (now Herkimer village) about three in the afternoon, having traversed a distance of fifty miles through an unknown forest, crossing streams and morasses, climbing hills and surmounting many other obstacles. The general route those two traveled is indicated as above by Col. Willett's "narrative;" it must have been northerly of Floyd Corners, through Trenton and into Russia, Herkimer County. "Simm's Frontiersmen of New York" says that years before the revolution a hurricane began in the westerly part of Oneida County and swept through the forest in an easterly direction across the present towns of Camden and Trenton, entering Herkimer County at a place called the "dugway" in Poland, and continued onward through the towns of Russia, Salsbury and Norway—extending a distance of fifty or sixty miles in length. Its breadth ranged from 60 to 100 rods and so great was its fury that almost every tree in its course was torn up by the roots. Its traces were visible for more than half a century afterward and a portion of the ground over which that tornado passed is called "the hurricane" to this day. It was doubtless in the track of that tornado Col. Willett found those patches of berries. Jones' Annals of Oneida county, state, that in the month of that siege, a hurricane of tremendous power passed through Westmoreland from west to east—its ravages extended from Oneida Lake to Cooperstown, half a mile and in some places a mile in width, prostrating the entire forest in its sweep; the severest effects were in that town. If both of those historical accounts of tornadoes are correct, there were two of them, six or seven years apart, passing over this county, one north and the other south of the Mohawk.

On the arrival of Col. Willett and Lieut. Stockwell at Fort Dayton, it was ascertained that Gen. Schuyler had ordered a brigade of Massachusetts troops, stationed some ten miles above Albany, to the relief of Fort Stanwix, and that Gen. Arnold was to be in command. Having rested for one night, Col. Willett and Lieut. Stockwell started early the next morning for Albany, on horseback to meet the troops and interview Gen. Arnold. The troops were met the same evening on their way. It was then learned that the First New York Regiment was also on its way to relieve the fort. On Saturday, August 16, Gen. Arnold and Col. Willett reached Fort Dayton, where the troops were assembled; on the way from Albany, Col. W. stopped to see Gen. Herkimer

at his residence near Little Falls, who that day had his leg amputated by reason of the injury in the battle at Oriskany ten days before; the latter died next day after the amputation. About the time that Col. Willett started down the valley for assistance, Walter N. Butler, a tory, who was in the battle of Oriskany, and was in the siege of Fort Stanwix, also went down to the Mohawk Settlements to rally his Tory friends. A number of them had assembled by appointment on Friday evening, August 15, at the house of one Shoemaker, one of the king's justices of the peace of Tryon county, there to be addressed by Butler. Shoemaker then resided at or near what is now Mohawk village, nearly opposite Herkimer village. The garrison of Fort Dayton received news of the assemblage and a detachment was sent to surround the house and capture the inmates. When Butler was in the midst of his harangue, the detachment swooped down upon the assemblage, and captured the whole posse, consisting of six or eight soldiers, and as many Indians, besides a number of tories, among whom was an ignorant, halfwitted fellow by the name of Han Yost Schuyler. Gen. Arnold at once ordered a court martial to try Butler and Schuyler as spies, for being found within the American lines. Col. Willett was appointed judge advocate; the two were convicted and sentenced to be executed. Gen. Arnold approved the sentence and ordered the execution to take place the next morning. Through the intercession of friends, the sentence of Butler was respited and he sent to Albany as a prisoner. Through carelessness or treachery he subsequently escaped and fled to Canada, and for years thereafter was the greatest scourge, by reason of his temper and cruelties ever inflicted upon the County of Tryon, and his name has been handed down through history, as the worst hated, and most detested of all the tories of those times. As to Han Yost Schuyler, his brother and widowed mother strongly interceded in his behalf and as he was a well known Tory and regarded by the Indians with a sort of superstition they always entertain toward such unfortunates, Gen. Arnold conceived the idea of using him to frighten away the besiegers at Fort Stanwix. That *ruse* and its success, have been so often told, that the story need not be repeated here; suffice it to say that by reason of the exaggerated stories Han Yost communicated to St. Leger, of the near approach of an overwhelming relieving force, the siege was abandoned August 22, and the besiegers hurriedly returned by the route they came 20 days be

fore, leaving behind the bombardier asleep in the bomb proof, St. Leger's private writing desk, the tents of the soldiers, provisions, artillery, ammunition, the entire camp equipage, and large quantities of other stores.

Han Yost Schayler fled with the fugitives as far as Oneida Lake; there he found means to leave them and to return to the fort, and apprise Col. Gansevoort of the *ruse*. This was the first notice the latter received of Gen. Arnold's approach, and explained why St. Leger had left in such haste. At four o'clock of the afternoon of the next day, Gen. Arnold arrived with his men, and with four brass field pieces, banners displayed, drums beating, music playing, they marched into the fort amid the booming of cannon, the discharge of musketry and the cheers of the garrison. The successful defense of Fort Stanwix to which Col. Willett so largely contributed, affixed the seal to American independence. Within two months thereafter, Burgoyne and his army laid down their arms on the field of Saratoga. Ticonderoga was abandoned, the British gave up the control of the Hudson and retreated down the river and New York was redeemed. These victories and others, commencing at that lone fortress in the then far off wilderness, sent a glow of joy throughout the thirteen colonies, and paved the way for France in less than four months thereafter to acknowledge our independence. The British press spoke in the highest praise of Col. Willett's achievements, of his journey down the river through pathless woods in quest of succor. Congress voted him a sword, and the next October, one was sent him, accompanied by a copy of the resolution of Congress, and a complimentary letter from John Hancock, president of that body. That testimonial is now in the possession of a descendant of Col. Willett, and a description of it is furnished me as follows: "It is one of ordinary length, rapier kind, running to a sharp point, and of Damascens steel; the handle is gold, platina and other metal, and on it is this inscription, '*Congress to Col. Willett, Oct., 1777.*'" After St. Leger's retreat Col. Willett passed several months in comparative inactivity. He completed the unfinished works of Fort Stanwix, and drilled the troops stationed there. The last of September, Col. Gansevoort having returned to that fort, Col. Willett set out to visit his family at Fishkill, where he arrived October 4, the very day the British captured Forts Clinton and Montgomery, and thereby obtained for a short time, control of the Hudson. Col. Willett remained for awhile in that vicinity,

assisting in the defense of the country about that river. That fall he visited the army under Washington, a dozen of miles from Philadelphia, and remained there until January, 1778, when he returned to Fort Stanwix. Wearied with this inactive and monotonous life, he set out in June, 1778, to join the army under Washington; on reaching Fishkill, he found there Gen. Gates, and on the 21st of that month, news came that the British had evacuated Philadelphia. As Gen. Gates had important information to communicate to Washington, Col. Willett was sent as the confidential messenger. He remained with the main army, and took part in the battle of Monmouth on the 28th of June, and continued with that army the rest of the year 1778.

The great campaign for the year 1779, was to be an invasion of the country in the western part of New York, occupied by the Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca Indians. Those tribes had taken sides with the British, and from their territory many of the incursions into the Mohawk settlements were planned; their rich agricultural fields had afforded support to the armies, and to the Indian families, while the war was thus carried on against the colonists. Those tribes possessed large cultivated fields, of great productiveness, also extensive gardens and orchards, and lived in frame houses, and had acquired some of the arts, and were in the enjoyment of many of the comforts of civilized life. They raised in profusion apples, pears, peaches, plums, melons, squashes, grapes, cranberries, beans and tobacco; corn was raised in large quantities; ears of that grain measured twenty-two inches in length; the first sweet corn ever seen in New England was carried thither from the country of the Six Nations by a soldier in his knapsack, during the war of the revolution. This Indian country included some fifty to sixty towns, all rudely built for those times. Washington, Schuyler and others and Congress felt that a country which furnished so much aid and comfort to the enemy, should be as thoroughly devastated as had been the valley of the Mohawk. To accomplish that purpose, two armies, one under Gen. Sullivan was to proceed from Pennsylvania, to meet another under Gen. Clinton at or near the junction of Tioga and Susquehanna rivers, below Newtown, now near Elmira, and thence proceed via Seneca and the other inland lakes into the heart of the Indian country of western New York. In April of that year, and as a part of the same campaign, some 600 troops, in charge of Cols. Willett and Van Schaack, were ordered from Fort Stanwix to go down Wood

Creek and into Oneida Lake to the Onondaga River, and thence into the country of the Onondagas, to lay their settlements waste, destroy their buildings and inflict the same kind of chastisement upon them that had been inflicted upon the white settlements. This expedition started from Fort Stanwix April 18, and was gone six days, traveling 180 miles, and most effectually accomplishing the work it set out to perform. About a dozen villages, extending a distance of some ten miles along the valley of the Onondaga streams, were burned, grain, cattle and other property destroyed, the swivel of their council house disabled, and the destruction of the settlements rendered complete. After this work Col. Willett returned to Canajoharie and then joined Gen. Clinton's army, for its destination to meet Gen. Sullivan. Four weeks Gen. Clinton was occupied in making the needed preparations; in August he and his army went overland to the head of Otsego Lake, the head waters of Susquehanna River, taking 200 boats from Canajoharie, each drawn by four horses, to that lake. The waters of the lake and river were raised by a dam, and the loaded boats were launched, to be carried down the river by the rushing waters. For the energy and ability displayed by Col. Willett in the part he took to start that flotilla, Gen. Clinton paid him a high compliment in a letter to Gen. Schuyler. The two armies of Gens. Sullivan and Clinton united, and on the 29th of August was fought the bloody and hotly contested battle of Newtown, in which the Indians under Brant and the Tories under Sir John Johnson and Col. John Butler were totally routed. The enemy fought with desperation, for they were fighting for their homes, and they knew that defeat meant the desolation of their country and the destruction of their firesides. There was no battle and not much opposition after that. Sullivan's army, 5,000 strong, overran the entire hostile country and laid it waste, leaving hardly a green, living or movable thing on the whole track of the invaders. They found it a garden, but left it a desert. Over forty towns, which included 700 buildings, were burned to ashes, 160,000 bushels of corn were destroyed, elegant gardens laid waste, 1,500 bearing fruit trees leveled to the ground, cattle killed or driven off, and the inhabitants compelled to seek safety in flight. It broke the backbone of the Iroquois confederacy, from which it never recovered. That campaign has passed into history as the "Sullivan's expedition." The ravages of the Indian country, made by that expedition, incited those hostile tribes and the Tories to retaliate in kind and to wreak their

vengeance the next year upon the white settlements of Tryon county. After that expedition Col. Willett again returned to the main army and rendered himself useful in connection therewith. In the winter of 1779-80 he led a detachment of 500 men, and with one field piece, crossed at night on the ice over to Staten Island and captured seventeen wagonloads of stores, which at that particular juncture were of great service to the troops. The same winter he led another expedition to Paulus Hook, (Jersey City,) captured a redoubt and all of the cattle of the British. It was the celerity of Col. Willett's movements, the fertility of his resources and his untiring activity that rendered him such a valuable aid to the patriot cause and so much dreaded by the enemy. He was in that war to the Americans what Sheridan was to the North and Stonewall Jackson to the South in the recent civil war. Wherever he commanded he inspired the confidence and enthusiasm of his men, and they generally followed wherever he dared to lead.

During the year 1780 and while the Indians and Tories were committing terrible ravages in Tryon county, Col. Willett was with the main army in Westchester county, but nothing of importance occurred, so far as he was concerned. The County of Tryon during the first six years of the war, suffered more severely than any other extent of territory within the thirteen colonies. Within its borders more campaigns were performed, more battles fought, more people murdered and more dwellings burned than in any other section. The Board of Supervisors of that county, reported to the Legislature in December, 1780, that during the war 700 buildings had been burned, 354 families had abandoned their homes and removed from the country, 613 persons had deserted to the enemy, 197 had been killed, 121 taken captives, and 1,200 farms were uncultivated by reason of the enemy, and this did not include some five or six other settlements. Other statistics show that thousands of horses and cattle had been killed or stolen, millions of bushels of grain destroyed, and that 300 women had been made widows, and 2,000 children made orphans. These ravages and misfortunes, earned for the valley of the Mohawk, the title of "the dark and bloody ground," and well nigh extinguished the hopes and crushed out the spirit of the people. The year 1781 opened gloomily upon the inhabitants of that valley. In this emergency, Gov. Clinton bethought himself of one who could revive the drooping spirits of the people, whose presence

would arouse great enthusiasm and be a tower of strength in the valley. That one was Col. Marinus Willett. At the urgent solicitation of Gov. Clinton and with great reluctance, Col. Willett consented to leave the main army, and make his headquarters in the valley to take command of the levies assigned to that branch of the State service. His strong sympathies with the suffering people, his acquaintance with Indian methods and modes of warfare, and the assurances of Gov. Clinton that his presence was needed, induced him to undertake the laborious and hazardous service. He has left on record the assertion that one year of such work was more trying and laborious than all of the other years of the war. The fore part of July, 1781, Col. Willett established his headquarters at Canajoharie, and it was not long thereafter before his services were called into requisition.

In the year 1781 there were twenty-four forts between Schenectady and Fort Dayton, (now Herkimer village), into which the inhabitants of the valley sought refuge when pressed by the enemy, or otherwise threatened with danger. Some of these forts were nothing more than dwellings within picketed inclosures; nevertheless they afforded a comparative security against sudden irruptions from the foe. Early that year the whole northern and western frontiers of New York were threatened with invasions, and the people were weighed down by a deeper feeling of unrest and despondency than at any former period during the war. The country between Albany and Lake Champlain was suffering for want of provisions and in danger of raids from Canada in that direction, while Brant and his dusky warriors were hovering about the valley of the Mohawk, ready to pounce upon any soldier or inhabitant who was unfortunate enough to be caught away from his comrades or the forts. It was in the spring of that year that Brant and his Indians, while prowling around Fort Stanwix and its vicinity, picked up and carried off some thirty of the garrison of that fort. In May of the same year that Fort was so badly injured by fire and flood that it was abandoned, and the men removed to other quarters. It was in the midst of this deep gloom and general discouragement that Col. Willett consented to take command of the northwestern frontier and make his headquarters in the Mohawk valley. The fore part of July, 1781, he established himself at Canajoharie, where he had one hundred and twenty men; at Fort Herkimer he had about twenty more, at Ballston some thirty, and at Catskill twenty; in other parts of the valley were

less than one hundred more. These did not include the militia nor the new levies soon expected to be raised. The country he was to defend was all of New York west of Albany county, and included Catskill and other exposed points along the Hudson. He was not left long without occupation; even while establishing his headquarters, a force of three or four hundred, mostly Indians, was on its way from Canada to attack the Mohawk settlements. Capt. John Dockstader was a bitter Tory, and, some time before, had fled from that part of the country and collected the above Indians and Tories to return and raid his old neighbors and acquaintances, and in hopes, if successful, of becoming a major. This raiding party took the route from Canada, through the Seneca country, traveled by the "Sullivan expedition" of two years before, thence struck off for the head waters of the Susquehanna to the Mohawk valley settlements, in the direction of what is now Sharon Springs. Dockstader and his men, pursued their course with such quietness and stealth, that they reached without being discovered, a dense cedar swamp of some seventy-five acres, about half a mile southwest of what is now Sharon Centre, some two miles east of Sharon Springs. Upon a slight rise of ground within that swamp, concealed from view, those raiders encamped for the first night, and most of them started off the next morning, Monday, July 9th, to attack Corrytown, a small settlement of a dozen houses, six or eight miles distant in a northeasterly direction, in what is now the town of Root, in Montgomery county, three miles south of Spraker's Basin, and about a dozen miles southeasterly from Canajoharie, where Col. Willett was located. It so happened that early on the same morning, that those Indians and Tories left that swamp for Corrytown, Col. Willett, without knowing that an enemy was in that direction, sent out from Canajoharie, a scouting party of thirty-five men, under Capt. Gross, to patrol the country around Sharon Springs, then a strong Tory settlement known as New Dorlach, and to procure beeves and other supplies for the garrison, also to see if an enemy was near. The fact that New Dorlach was a Tory settlement, was doubtless the incentive for Dockstader, to make that swamp his headquarters and hiding place, for his Tory sympathizers were undoubtedly apprised of his coming, and kept it a secret. The same feeling probably moved Col. Willett to be suspicious of that locality, and to make it the base of his supplies. Capt. Gross had been gone but a few hours on his scouting expedition, when the garrison at

Canajoharie, discovered about noon, fire and smoke in the direction of Corrytown. The Indians had commenced their work of pillage and destruction. Col. Willett at once dispatched to Corrytown, Capt. McKean, with sixteen levies and with orders to collect as many militia on the route, as he could gather, and at the same time he sent a messenger post haste after Capt. Gross to inform him of the fire, and of the probable proximity of the enemy in New Dorlach, with instructions to discover their location. Capt. Gross struck the trail the enemy made, when it left the swamp for Corrytown, and by its width, estimated the number to be three or four hundred; he sent two or three of his men to follow the trail to its starting place, while he retired to a safe and convenient point of observation, and waited for his men to return; after following the trail about a mile, the men reached the encampment in the swamp, discovered a large number of packs, and that some of the Indians left behind were engaged in cooking, as if expecting the main body to return for the night. They, undiscovered, stole a blanket from one of the tents and then hurried back to report to Capt. Gross. The latter at once sent a man on horseback to Col. Willett. In the meantime the latter was busy all the afternoon in collecting the militia and getting ready to start at a moment's notice. Capt. McKean reached Corrytown in time to quench the flames in one or two of the dwellings after the enemy had left, but not in time, nor would he have been able had he arrived sooner, to save the dozen other buildings, which Dockstader and his men burned to the ground, nor to have protected the inhabitants, which were murdered or carried away captives by that superior force. There was a picketed block house in that settlement into which a few hurried and were saved, while others sought safety by hiding in the woods, or by being fleet of foot. Cattle and horses were killed or driven away, and, when the Indians left, about 4 P. M., they left behind them a sad and sickening scene of desolation. When word from Capt. Gross reached Col. Willett it was near night, and he at once set off for the swamp, with orders for Capt. McKean and Capt. Vedder at Fort Paris (two miles northeast of Fort Plain) to follow. It was Col. Willett's intention to reach the camp in the night, surprise and attack it before daylight, but the woods were thick, with no road better than a bridle path; the night was dark, and the guide lost his way, so that it was six in the morning before Col. Willett and Capts. McKean and Gross reached the camp. In the meantime the enemy had news of the approach

and had changed their ground to a more advantageous position, about one-eighth of a mile northwest of Sharon Centre, instead of one-half a mile to the southwest, where they encamped. Col. Willett divided his forces into two parallel lines, or in the form of a crescent and placed them in a ravine and sent a small detachment over the brow of the hill to show themselves to the enemy with orders at the first fire to retreat and draw the Indians into the ravine—much like the trap into which Herkimer was caught at the battle of Oriskany. The decoy succeeded and the Indians came rushing on, yelling, whooping, hallooing, until they met Col. Willett's men; there they were checked, the tide of battle turned, and after a sharp fight of nearly two hours, the enemy fled, Col. Willett following vigorously in the pursuit, calling on his men to follow, while he waved his hat and shouted at the top of his voice, "Come on boys, the day is ours. I can catch in my hat all the bullets the rascals can send," and at the same time, gave orders in a loud tone of voice, as if directing a detachment to reach the rear of the enemy to cut off their retreat. The Indians and Tories were thoroughly frightened and fled in great confusion, leaving behind the plunder and booty taken the day before, killing some of their captives and hurrying off with the rest. They also left behind forty of their own dead and all of their camp equipage. The victory was complete, and produced inspiring effect upon the Americans. The loss of Col. Willett was five men, among whom was the brave and meritorious Capt. McKean and his son. The captain was shot in the battle, but died after he had reached Canajoharie. Dockstader and his men hurriedly left the valley, he without earning the commission of major, which he expected, and that party did not again molest the Mohawk settlements. A brief sketch of some of the incidents attending this invasion will be sufficient to indicate the trials and sufferings the inhabitants of Tryon county passed through during the whole period of the revolutionary war. The attack upon Corrytown was so wholly unexpected the settlers were not prepared for it: most of them were at work in the fields, and but few had an opportunity to reach the picketed inclosure. Jacob Diefendorf, a pioneer settler, with his two young sons, were at work in the field; one of the sons, 12 or 14 years old, was tomahawked and scalped, and after lying several hours insensible, bathed in his blood, he crawled to the picketed enclosure, without knowing what he was doing. On reaching his friends he imploringly raised his hands and besought

them not to kill him; his wounds were dressed, and he recovered and lived for several years thereafter. The other son was taken captive and carried to the cedar swamp, and when the Indians were routed by Col. Willett, young Diefendorf was scalped and left for dead. He covered himself with the leaves of the trees to keep off the flies from his wound, and when discovered, covered and begrimed with blood, he was at first supposed to be an Indian. He was taken back to his friends, his wounds dressed, and, although his head was five years in healing, he eventually recovered and became one of the wealthiest farmers in Montgomery county. He died in 1859 at the age of 85 years. A girl a dozen years old, was also taken prisoner to that cedar swamp, and when the enemy were defeated and found they could not take their young captive with them to Canada, the Indians took her scalp, as they did not wish to lose the bounty the British government had offered for scalps. When the settlers at Corrytown saw the enemy approaching, a husband and father started from his house with his family to reach the picketed block house. He had a small child in one hand and his gun in the other, followed by his wife with an infant in her arms and several children on foot hold of her dress. A savage fired at them, the bullet passed near the head of the child in the father's arms and lodged in the pickets. That was the last family that reached the fort. As before stated, the Indians plundered all of the buildings in the neighborhood and set them on fire, and all were burned except one.

The news of Dockstader's defeat was received with great joy throughout the country. The common council of the city of Albany, on the 19th of the month the battle was fought, passed complimentary resolutions in favor of Col. Willett and his officers and men for their bravery and intrepidity in that battle and voted to Col. Willett the freedom of that city. That battle took place on July 10, 1781, and has passed into history as "the battle of Sharon." Its centennial anniversary was observed in July, 1881 by the inhabitants of that part of the State. As I learn from residents of that locality that cedar swamp yet remains, covered with trees, about as impassable as ever, except in very dry seasons or in the coldest of weather, when the grounds and the small lake in the center are frozen hard. Soon after that battle news came to Col. Willett at one o'clock at night that a party of fifty or sixty Indians were hovering around a settlement five or six miles distant. In an hour's time he had a captain of militia company,

with seventy men, in pursuit, but the Indians wisely took to their heels. It was by reason of such promptness and the celerity of Col. Willett's movements, his dash in battle, and his seeming ubiquity that the Indians had such a dread and fear of him; they believed he possessed supernatural powers; they called him "the devil."

During that summer the enemy appeared at intervals in small numbers in different parts of the valley, but nothing occurred to dignify it with the name of an invasion or a raid.

Over three months had passed since the irruption of Dockstader; the farmers had gathered their crops, filled their granaries, and partially settled down into the belief that the year 1781 would pass along without any more formidable invasions of the valley, with its attendant consequences. If such a hope was entertained, it proved illusory, and the expectation was doomed to disappointment. In the forenoon of Wednesday, October 24th, a hostile force of 700 men, composed of British, Indians and Tories under the command of Majors Ross and Walter N. Butler was first discovered in the valley near Argusville in Schoharie county, making its way towards Corrytown. That expedition was organized at Bucks, now called Carleton Island in the St. Lawrence, and thence it proceeded across Lake Ontario to Oswego, thence by the water route to Oneida Lake as far as Chittenango Creek; at that point, the boats were secreted, and the men struck across the country through Onondaga, Madison and Otsego counties, to the vicinity in Schoharie, where first discovered. The enemy proceeded to Corrytown, plundered the dwellings, made prisoners of the inhabitants, but avoided setting fires, lest they might alarm the garrison of Col. Willett, and thereby be frustrated in accomplishing their undertaking. From that point they proceeded to the Mohawk, followed it down on the south side, to Fort Hunter, where Schoharie Creek empties into the river; they arrived at that point at nightfall, crossed over the creek into what was then called Warrensburgh, now the town of Florida in Montgomery county. Fearing they were going too far to the eastward, they crossed the next morning to the northerly side of the Mohawk, east of Tribe's Hill, and by a circuitous route went to Johnstown and the old baronial hall of Sir William Johnson, where they arrived at noon Thursday, October 25th. The whole track of the enemy was marked by the murder or capture of inhabitants, stealing of horses and cattle, plunder of dwellings and destruction

of property. Late in the afternoon of the day the enemy was seen moving down the river towards Fort Hunter, the news of their march was brought to Col. Willett; he immediately mustered all the spare forces at hand, sent orders to other points for the militia to follow on after him, while he crossed to the south side of the Mohawk in pursuit. He marched all night, and reached Fort Hunter, some twenty miles east of Canajoharie, in the morning, and was proceeding to cross Schoharie Creek, and follow the enemy into the town of Florida, when he learned that the latter was on their way to Johnstown. The Mohawk was deep at that point and not fordable and Col. Willett was obliged to procure boats or floats to get his men over that river, so that it was noon before he reached the north side. His troops were at once formed in marching order and set off in haste for Johnstown. Col. Willett had 416 men; the enemy about double that number. They reached Johnstown about the middle of the afternoon. Col. Willett sent a small detachment under command of Major Rowley to the east to attack the enemy in the rear, while he engaged them in front. A sharp engagement ensued, resulting in driving the enemy into the edge of the woods near by, when of a sudden, without any known or explainable reason, Willett's men were seized with a panic and fled from the field, leaving a cannon in possession of the enemy, and some of them seeking refuge in a stone church. The efforts of Col. Willett to rally them were in vain. At that unfortunate time Major Rowley's force came upon the enemy's rear, attacked them with great vigor, throwing them into confusion and driving them from the field. They, however, rallied, and in turn drove back Major Rowley, and the two contending forces were alternately defeated, and so the fighting continued until sunset. In the meantime Col. Willett succeeded in gathering his men and returned to the fight. At dark the enemy was totally beaten, driven further into the woods, and sought safety on the top of a mountain, six miles distant to the north. After dark Col. Willett procured lights and buried the dead. His loss was forty killed; he took fifty prisoners, from whom it was learned that the enemy intended to move the next day upon Stone Arabia, in the vicinity of what is now known as Palatine Bridge, with a view to obtain provisions. Col. Willett moved his men to that locality, while he sent a scouting party to follow the enemy and keep track of their movements. By this scouting party he learned that the enemy were moving north-

westerly, nearly parallel with the Mohawk, toward the northerly part of Herkimer county, as if it was the intention to get out of the reach of the Americans, and then strike down to the Mohawk and across the country to Chittenango Creek, where the boats had been left. To prevent such a movement, Col. Willett, on the morning of Saturday, October 27, sent a detachment to destroy the boats while he marched his men to Fort Herkimer, on the south side of the river, some two miles east of Herkimer village, there to await developments, still keeping spies on the trail of the enemy, with orders to send swift messengers to him at every turn of affairs. Majors Ross and Butler marched their men at a slow pace, for they were hemmed in the woods, short of provisions, and exposed to great dangers. On Monday, October 29, they encamped in a thick wood in the north part of what is now the town of Norway, about half a mile from Black Creek—an encampment which has passed down by traditions as “Butler’s ridge.” Thus it will be seen, by looking on a map of New York, the slow progress that was made after the battle of Johnstown, some forty miles distant. During the four days the enemy was on that route the weather was cold and each man had only one-half pound of horse flesh each day on which to subsist. On the 28th the detachment returned, which Col. Willett had sent to the boats, without having accomplished (for some reason,) the work it was sent to do. Late in the afternoon of Sunday, October 28, Col. Willett received word that the enemy were striking still deeper into the wilderness, as if to make their escape by crossing West Canada Creek miles above Trenton Falls, and thence steer their course through a pathless forest, via the Black River to Carleton Island. To frustrate that move, a short time before dark of the same day, Col. Willett selected 400 of his best troops with sixty Oneida Indians, who had that day joined his forces, and taking five days’ provisions, he started out, crossed the Mohawk, and followed up the valley of West Canada Creek and encamped that night in the woods above Fort Dayton (now Herkimer village).

Early the next morning, Col. Willett and his men were astir, following up the easterly side of the creek, to what is now Middleville, marching in the midst of a driving snow storm, and pushing their way in a northeasterly direction, into the north part of the town of Norway, and at dark, encamped for the night in a dense wood, about a mile, as it turned out, from the enemy’s

encampment. A scouting party was at once sent forward to discover the location of the foes, and to ascertain whether Col. Willett was in their front or rear; that party soon returned with the news of the proximity of the retreating forces, and at first, Col. Willett thought to make a night attack, but as the enemy had a supply of bayonets which his men had not, he concluded to wait until the morrow. At break of day, Tuesday, October 30, the Americans were again on foot, a scout having been sent ahead to learn what the enemy were doing. The main body of the men of Ross and Butler were up as early as the pursuers and on the march, a detachment being in the rear as a guard, and to bring on the baggage and provisions; that scouting party got in between the advance and rear forces, and one of them was shot while the others hurried back to Willett with the news. The pursuers were hurriedly pushed forward, and overtook the enemy near Black Creek, an engagement ensued, in which the enemy were compelled to retreat; frequent skirmishes took place all the way to West Canada Creek, some two or three miles, the enemy seeming perfectly discouraged and demoralized and only too anxious to get out of reach and harm's way. They reached West Canada Creek, hurriedly crossed, and when on the opposite shore rallied and another sharp skirmish ensued—the creek separating the combatants. In that engagement Walter N. Butler was shot and instantly killed, as Col. Willett says, the ball entered his eye and passed out the back part of his head. Accounts differ as to whether Butler was killed by a random shot, or by one taking deliberate aim, and also as to whether he was scalped. The most reliable account is, that he was killed by a stray bullet and that he was not scalped, as Col. Willett makes no mention of it in his narrative, but simply says, "he was shot dead." Thus perished Walter N. Butler, the greatest scourge, the most cruel and inhuman monster, and the worst hated Tory, who inflicted his presence upon the border settlements of Pennsylvania and New York. His father later on offered a reward for the recovery of the body, but it was never restored to him, nor would the American soldiers accord it a burial; they left it to bleach and rot upon the identical ground where it had fallen. The news of this victory and death spread through the valley, about the time that the tidings came of the capture of the army of Cornwallis at Yorktown: yet that surrender did not give more, if so much, joy to the inhabitants of the valley, as the assurance that Walter N.

Butler had passed from earth. After the shooting of Butler the enemy fled in confusion, and at a rapid gait, leaving behind packs and all that encumbered their retreat, and struck off through the dense and pathless wilderness in the direction of the valley of the Black River. After seven days' journey, of innumerable sufferings and untold hardships, they reached Carleton Island, eighty miles distant, in a famishing condition, many of the men who crossed Canada Creek having perished by the way. Col. Willett and his men crossed that stream and followed in pursuit until nearly dark; but as the Americans were getting short of provisions, and as the enemy retreated with such rapidity, it was deemed prudent to return, as the victory was as complete as if the whole of the enemy's forces were captured. On the return to recross the creek, the Americans discovered a five-year-old white girl near a fallen tree, crying piteously. She had been stolen from her parents, but as the Indians did not wish to be further encumbered with her, they left the waif where she was found, near the fallen tree. The little girl was taken in charge and restored to her friends down the valley. The place of the enemy's crossing on West Canada Creek is about five miles up the stream from Gang, or Hinkley's Mills, and nearly double that distance above Trenton Falls. It is near the line between the towns of Russia and Ohio in Herkimer county. At that point the stream is fordable for two or three miles, owing to the rifts and to small and large stones in the channel of the creek. It is now known as "Hess's Rifts," and the crossing place is called by some "Butler's Ford."

In the pocket of Butler when his dead body was found was the same commission he exhibited on his trial as a spy four years before at the time Col. Willett acted as judge advocate some ten days after the battle of Oriskany. Let me state in this connection and by way of parenthesis that Dr. William Petry (grandfather of Judges Robert and Samuel Earl of Herkimer,) was surgeon general in Col. Willett's regiment, appointed in April, 1781, and was in this expedition; and was all through the war, and was wounded at the battle of Oriskany four years before.

The loss of the enemy in this October incursion of Ross and Butler was never known. Col. Willett's official dispatches contain the following: "The fields of Johnstown, the brooks and rivers, the hills and mountains, the deep and gloomy marshes and dense woods through which they had to pass, these only could tell; and perhaps the officers who detached them on this expedition." Gen.

Heath, the American commander of the northern frontier, issued a general order in November, 1781, commending Lord Sterling, Gen. Stark and others for their services that year, and mentions the battle of Johnstown, the defeat of Ross and Butler and the death of the latter, and adds: "The general presents his thanks to Col. Willett whose address, gallantry and persevering activity exhibited on this occasion do him highest honor."

This expedition closed the war in the valley of the Mohawk for that year. In fact, there was no longer much of anything left in that valley for a hostile expedition to destroy; the inhabitants had lost pretty much all, except the soil they cultivated, most of their fine farms had been turned into a wilderness waste, except in the vicinity of the forts, and at times hunger stared the settlers in the face, and famine seemed inevitable. These resistances in the valley, may seem unimportant, because no great battles were fought, and no great victories won; nevertheless they stemmed the tide of the enemy's advance into the interior, and kept them back from the towns of the Hudson, and prevented the establishment of a chain of forts along that river, which was a favorite scheme and a long cherished hope and object of the British.

For the year 1782, Col. Willett remained at his headquarters on the Mohawk, but no considerable force of the enemy appeared at any one time, to molest the inhabitants of Tryon county. Small and scattering bodies of Indians appeared at various places, causing trouble and creating alarm, but no very serious disturbances occurred. The exigencies of the times required vigilance and alertness on the part of Col. Willett, and the sending of squads of troops in the night, several miles into the wilderness, or into neighboring localities, to drive out the enemy, or to discover if one was near, yet the campaign of 1782 closed without any important event in Tryon county. The substantial fighting of the war ended with the surrender of Cornwallis, and negotiations for peace between the two countries were commenced in Europe near the close of the year of 1782. For nearly a year there was an armistice, nevertheless, none of the efforts of the American officers were relaxed, to preserve the discipline of the troops and to keep the country in an attitude of defense. The recruiting of New York State troops had been successful that year, by reason of the legislature offering a bounty of money, instead of a bounty in lands, so that at the close of the year 1782, Col. Willett had a regiment of 400 State troops. Having prepared winter barracks



for his men, inoculated many of them for small pox, and built a log hut for himself, Col. Willett set out the last of November for Albany. Thence he went to Fishkill for his wife, with the intention to take her to his winter quarters during the winter of 1782-3. At that time Gen. Washington's headquarters were at Newburgh, opposite Fishkill Landing, and there Col. Willett went to pay his respects to the commander-in-chief; he remained to dinner, and as he left the table and arose to depart, Washington invited Col. Willett into the office, and unfolded a secret plan of sending an expedition the then coming winter to surprise and capture Oswego. Col. Willett was asked to lead the expedition. The latter had made arrangements for passing the winter with his wife in comfortable quarters, and it was with reluctance that he hesitated to accept the request of the commander-in-chief. He departed with a promise to think of it, and let Washington soon know the result of his conclusions. A correspondence ensued, and as Gen. Washington desired to keep the matter a profound secret, the correspondence on his part was in his own handwriting. Col. Willett accepted the position. At that time Oswego was one of the most formidable defenses on this continent, and had given the enemy by its possession, and that of Niagara, great advantage during the war. The whole expedition was to be one of secrecy, for upon it depended its success, and the positive instructions of Washington to Col. Willett were, not to attack nor attempt to capture Oswego, except by surprise. On Saturday, the 8th of February, 1783, the troops were suddenly assembled at Fort Herkimer, and a large portion of them supplied with snow shoes, as they had no beaten track to follow, and the snow was from two and one-half to three feet deep. The men thus provided went ahead and made a track for a cavalcade of 200 sleighs that followed, carrying the remainder of the troops and the baggage. The expedition reached Oneida Lake Sunday night, February 9, and crossed it that night on the ice, and arrived at Fort Brewerton, at the foot of the lake, where the sleighs were left, and the men followed the river on ice to Oswego Falls (now Fulton) and arrived there about 2 p. m., February 10. There they went into the woods, made ladders and the prospect of stealing unawares upon the garrison and capturing the fort was everything that could be desired. At 10 o'clock that night the expedition reached a point of land about four miles from the fort; here on account of the weakness of the ice on Oswego River, men were obliged to take to the land,

and pursue the route through the woods. An Oneida Indian, who was considered every way trustworthy and reliable, and supposed to be familiar with the woods and the route, was selected as a guide. Four hours remained before the moon set, the time appointed to attack the fort, then four miles distant.

The guide took the lead, the men following his track. In two hours' time, not discovering an opening in the woods, Col. Willett went to the front to ascertain the cause, and learned the guide was considerably ahead and the men following blindly on the tracks in the snow; in the course of an hour the guide was overtaken and found standing still, apparently lost and bewildered. The men had been led into a swamp, some in snaken holes and many had frozen feet and one man was frozen to death. The guide had struck other tracks in the snow, which he followed supposing they led to the fort, but instead, they led in another direction down the lake. In this perplexity there was no alternative but to forego the attack on the fort, and to retrace their steps. The men were in the woods three days without provisions, and were gone twelve days on the expedition. Before they left Fort Herkimer peace had been concluded in Europe, but it was not known in this country; while this expedition was on its way to Oswego, the news of peace was received by Congress. After Col. Willett returned to his headquarters he went to Albany and there heard the glorious news proclaimed to the rejoicing inhabitants by the town clerk at the city hall. In Col. Willett's "narrative," the letters to him from Gen. Washington in relation to that expedition, are published, and the one of March 5, 1783, completely exonerates him from all blame and expresses the high sense which the commander-in-chief entertained of Col. Willett's persevering exertions and zeal on that expedition, and tendered his warmest thanks on the occasion.

On Friday, April 11, 1783, Congress issued its proclamation announcing a cessation of hostilities on sea and land, and once again smiling peace prevailed throughout the borders. The thirteen colonies were now a free and independent nation, the armies were disbanded, the soldiers returned to the peaceful pursuits of life, exchanged the weapons of war for the implements of husbandry, the scattered population of the country gradually gathered at their firesides, at their old homes, and once more the people of Tyrone county rejoiced and smiled through their tears.

And now was to follow the inauguration of a new government, the

adoption of a new civil polity and the creation of new offices. Old things were to be done away and all things to become new. There was a general hatred of everything that was English, and a universal feeling that, as far as possible, it should be banished from the land. The name of Kings' College was changed to that of Columbia. The county of Charlotte, named in honor of England's queen, the wife of George III, of revolutionary times, was, by an act of the legislature of April, 1784, changed to that of Washington; while by the same act of the legislature, and as a grateful tribute and sense of poetic justice, the county named after the hated and last Tory governor of New York, the county wherein Col. Willett achieved his grandest triumphs, was given the name of the patriot, Montgomery, under whom Capt. Willett won his first laurels in battling for the existence of the infant republic. These are but a few instances of the changes effected. So, too, those who had served faithfully and honorably in the war, were generally remembered and rewarded in the civil appointments in the State, although no law was passed, as there was 100 years later, requiring such appointments to be preferential. Col. Samuel Clyde, a major at the battle of Oriskany, and who had rendered efficient services in the Mohawk valley as an officer in the American army, was appointed the first sheriff of Montgomery county. Col. Colbrath, another officer in the patriot army, and lieutenant in the "Sullivan expedition," was appointed the first sheriff of Herkimer, and later, the first one of Oneida. Col. Willett was elected to the assembly from New York in 1783, and the next year appointed sheriff of that county for three years. To be "high sheriff" was considered in those times of more importance, dignity and consequence than in these days to be governor of the State. The grandfather of Col. Willett was sheriff of Queens county in 1820, and his ancestors sheriffs of that county as follows: Thomas Willett in 1683, Elbert in 1705, Thomas in 1707, Cornelius in 1708 and Thomas in 1770. In 1790 Col. Willett was appointed by President Washington commissioner to the Creek Indians, on a peace mission, that tribe having assumed a hostile attitude. He left in March and was absent four months, and was eminently successful in his errand, and war was averted. Col. Willett's thorough acquaintance with Indian character, habits, modes of thought and reasoning, peculiarly fitted him for such a mission. In 1791 he was again appointed sheriff of New York, and held the office this time for four years. Col. Willett was of powerful frame and of great

physical strength, and, of course, perfectly fearless. It is stated that while sheriff, to quell a riotous assemblage, he collared the ringleader, a brawny, broad shouldered, two-listed butcher, and laid his prostrate form on the floor, where he was held as powerless as a hopped sheep. In 1792 Col. Willett was elected one of the directors of the Western Inland Lock Navigation Canal, the object being internal improvements, to connect the waters of the Hudson with Lakes George and Champlain and those of the Mohawk with Wood Creek at Rome. In the same year a general Indian war with the western tribes was apprehended, and Col. Willett was tendered the office of brigadier general in the United States army. This position he declined as he was not in favor of thus dealing with the Indians; his advocacy of peace policy was adopted and war avoided. In 1807 he was appointed mayor of New York in place of DeWitt Clinton and was, a year later, succeeded by Mr. Clinton. That office in those times of Col. Willett was one of great honor, dignity and emolument, and was sought after by men of ability and high standing. It is said to have been worth from \$10,000 to \$15,000 a year, and Col. Willett said that office yielded him a greater revenue during the year he held it, than did the seven years' office of sheriff. In 1803 when DeWitt Clinton was first appointed to that office, he resigned the office of United States Senator to accept it, and he had for his competitors Elward Livingston, Morgan Lewis, then Justices of the Supreme Court of the State, and the next year elected Governor.

The great-grandfather of Col. Willett, it will be remembered, was the first English mayor of New York. In 1811 DeWitt Clinton was the nominee for the office of lieutenant-governor of one branch of his party, and Col. Willett of the other branch. Col. Nicholas Fish, of the army of the revolution, father of Hamilton Fish, afterward governor, was the Federal nominee. The latter received an overwhelming majority in New York city as the opponents of Mr. Clinton, in his own party, voted direct for Mr. Fish, as the surer way of defeating Mr. Clinton. But the latter was elected, as he was strong in the rural districts. Hammond's Political History of New York, in referring to this contest, says that Col. Willett had been an officer of great merit in the revolutionary war, and in private life was regarded as an amiable and worthy citizen, but he had been somewhat wavering in politics and, in former days, had been inclined to support the faction of Aaron Burr. In the war of 1812 an immensely large public war

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meeting was held in City Hall Park in August, 1814, to support that war and approve the measures of President Madison. Col. Willett addressed that meeting and, while standing beneath the flag of the nation, which waved over his head, he made a brief, but telling speech, which awakened unbounded enthusiasm and applause. He said it was a favorite toast in the war of the revolution that "May every citizen become a soldier, and every soldier a citizen," and that the time had again come when our citizens must be soldiers. He concluded his brief speech as follows: "In the war of the revolution there was a chorus to a song we used to sing in camp, in days of much more danger, which ran as follows:

Let Europe empty all her force,
We'll meet them in array
And shout Huzza, Huzza, Huzza,
For life and liberty.

This pithy discourse from an old man, near seventy-five years of age, whose services in behalf of his country were well known, was applauded to the very echo.

In the Greek revolution of 1823 Col. Willett warmly sympathized with the oppressed of that country. He was chairman of a committee appointed to aid the Greeks in their struggle for independence. A large meeting was held in the park in New York city, which was addressed by Col. Willett.

In that speech, he referred to the fact that it was in the same place, where he assisted in 1765 in burning effigies of those who aided in the passage of the odious stamp act; the same park, where enthusiastic meetings were held in 1775, in favor of American independence in which he took part; that those were glorious times for him, and that the struggle of the Greeks was not unlike that of the Americans for freedom. He offered to aid the cause of Greece by donating 2,000 acres of land to which he was entitled by an act of the legislature of New York, passed in March, 1781. He said his labors in defending the frontiers of New York, by which he earned that bounty, were by far the most arduous of any that he performed during the whole revolutionary war; that there was more fatigue, more hazard and more anxiety in one of those campaigns than in seven such as he had served under Washington. Such is Col. Willett's testimony as to his labors in Tryon county. In 1824, presidential electors in New York were appointed by the legislature; Col. Willett was one of the appointees, and was elected president of the electoral college.



Whether he voted for John Quincy Adams, Gen. Jackson, Henry Clay or William H. Crawford, all them candidates, I have not ascertained. In 1824, President Monroe, pursuant to a resolve of Congress invited LaFayette to become the guest of this nation; he accepted the invitation, but modestly declined the offer of a conveyance to this country in a United States ship of the line. He left Havre July 12, 1824, and after a voyage of 34 days, arrived off Sandy Hook quite early in the morning of Sunday, August 15. Forty thousand people crowded the Battery to cheer and welcome his coming. Among the very first to meet and take LaFayette by the hand, was Joseph Bonaparte, then residing at Bordentown, New Jersey, ex-king of Spain, and brother of the great Napoleon. At 9 o'clock in the morning, a small vessel steamed up to quarantine to take LaFayette direct to the city, but as it was Sunday and he was to have a public reception in New York on the morrow he declined to go, but, instead, went straightway to the residence of Vice President Daniel D. Tompkins on Staten Island. It was near forty years since LaFayette had left this country, and when his feet once again touched American soil, the memories of the past, the great changes since his first coming, came rushing to the front in the thoughts of the thronging multitude who witnessed his landing, and the emotions were too great for suppression—too great to find utterance, except by salutes from all the ships in the harbor, the roaring of cannon, the ringing of bells and the loud acclaim of the people that the illustrious guest of the nation might receive a joyous and universal welcome. Nothing like it had ever before been witnessed on this continent. In the afternoon a vessel steamed over to Staten Island, taking a deputation from the common council of New York and a number of officers and soldiers of the revolutionary army, who had served under or with LaFayette. Among the number was Col. Willett. Those two became acquainted in 1778, while with Washington in the Jerseys and at the battle of Monmouth on June 28 of that year. A correspondence had been kept up between them subsequent to the close of the war, and many of LaFayette's letters are now in possession of the youngest son of Col. Willett and are in an excellent state of preservation and show, in their perfect legibility and neatness, the care with which LaFayette's correspondence was always conducted. The English of the letters is faultless in construction and orthography. For the purpose of preservation, and as showing the strong friendship existing between those two

soldiers, I herewith copy the whole of one letter and extracts from others:

PARIS, July 13, 1822.

My Dear Sir:

I avail myself of a good opportunity to remind you of your old friend and fellow-soldier in whose heart no time or distance can abate the patriotic remembrance and personal affections of our Revolutionary career. We remain but two survivors of that glorious epoch in which the fate of the two hemispheres has been decided. It is an additional reason to cherish more and more the ties of brotherly friendship which unite us. I find myself again engaged in a critical struggle between right and privilege.

May it be in my power before I join our departed companions to visit such of them as are still inhabitants of the United States and to tell you personally my dear Willett, how affectionately I am

Your sincere friend

LaFAYETTE.

Under date of July 1, 1824, a short time before LaFayette sailed from Europe he wrote Col. Willett in which he says: "The time most happy to me approaches when I shall embrace my old friend and brother soldiers," and concludes, "most truly and affectionately yours, LaFayette."

Under date of April 12, 1826, after his return to France, he writes: "Happy I am in every opportunity to renew and to form American connections. In so pleasing company I enjoy those feelings of American home which were never obliterated in my mind. Be pleased dear Willett, to let me hear from you and of the state of your health. Present my affectionate regards first in your house, then to your neighbors and to all our military companions and other friends in New York. Ever truly and affectionately your old friend and brother in arms, LaFayette."

Under date of April 6, 1828, he writes: "My dear Willett: It is fit I should present to our senior revolutionary comrade a son of the illustrious and unfortunate Marshal Ney, who intends to visit the United States. I doubly rejoice in every opportunity to hear from you and to offer the best wishes and tender regards of your affectionate brother soldier, LaFayette."

Under date of Christmas, 1828, he writes again and concludes his letter as follows:

Be pleased to remember me most affectionately to all our dear comrades in New York and vicinity and to your family knowing me to be forever

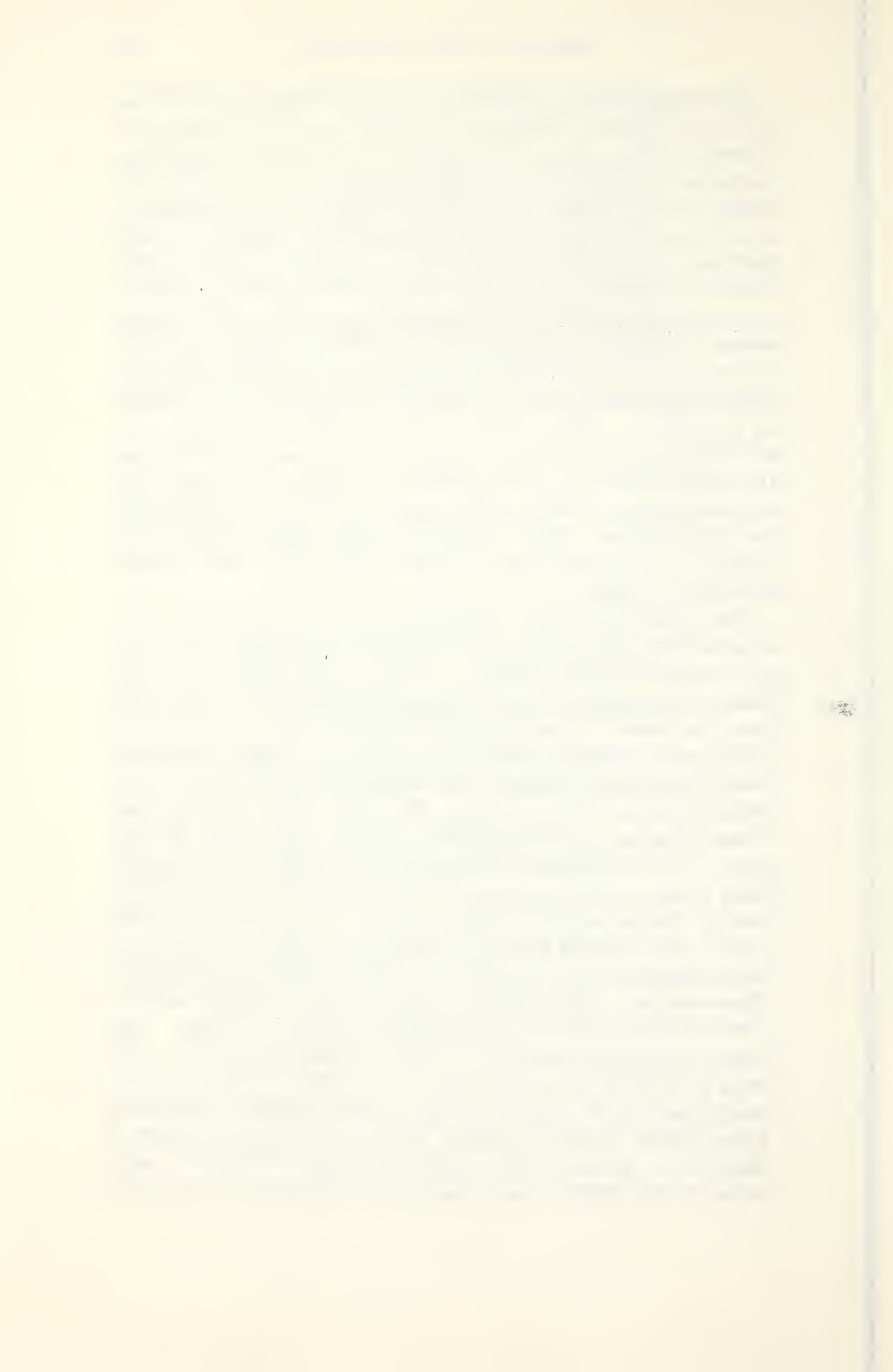
Your affectionate friend and brother in arms,

LaFAYETTE.

Col. Willett.

The meeting between LaFayette and Col. Willett, at the house of Vice President Tompkins is described by an eye-witness as extremely affectionate and touching. They embraced and kissed each other over and over again, like devoted lovers, and LaFayette talking to Col. Willett very tenderly. The former was then sixty-seven years old, and Col. Willett eighty-four. During the time LaFayette was in New York he was a frequent visitor at Col. Willett's residence, and the two were as much together as LaFayette could find time to spare from the receptions and ovations almost constantly awaiting him. On Friday, August 20th, the nation's guest left New York for Boston, in a coach drawn by four white horses, accompanied by numerous delegations and escorted by the military. That same eye-witness, who describes that visit of LaFayette, says that the cavalcade which escorted him from the city, passed in its route fields of cabbages, and other agricultural products then growing upon the site now occupied by the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Those yet alive, whose memories go back sixty-five years, may remember LaFayette's tour through this valley in 1825.

The legislature of New York, by an act passed in October, 1779, attainted fifty-eight persons (three of whom were ladies) of treason, and confiscated their property. Among the number was John Tabor Kempe, the last Tory Attorney General of New York, and then the owner of one-sixteenth of Coxe's Patent, or tract of 47,000 acres, which stretches across what are now Rome, Westmoreland, Whitestown, Kirkland, New Hartford, Marshall, Paris and Bridgewater, in Oneida county. His wife before marriage was Grace Coxe, one of the patentees and also part owner of that patent. On a subdivision of that patent and a sale of Mr. Kempe's share under that confiscation act, George Washington, Governor George Clinton and Col. Willett became owners of land in the patent. Col. Willett became purchaser, in August, 1784, of over seven hundred acres, part of it not far from Hampton village in Westmoreland. Alex. Parkman, who moved into that town in 1790, obtained title to one hundred acres from Col. Willett. The latter was also the owner of two thousand acres, known as "Willett's patent," in the north part of the town of Steuben, in this county, next to the Ava town line; he, with Elias Van Benseoten, owned fifteen hundred acres in the town of Ava, next north of above two thousand acre tract, and called "Willett's small patent." Col. Willett also owned lands in Bayard's patent and in



Twenty Township tract, Chenango county, hence, it is evident Oneida county people should be farther attracted and drawn toward one who was largely interested in lands in this county and vicinity so soon after the revolution, and fourteen years before Oneida county was organized.

Not long after the close of the revolutionary war, and probably within the last decade of the last century, Col. Willett purchased, for a homestead, a large parcel of vacant ground in what is now the thirteenth ward of New York city, near Corlear's Hook, extending from East River to what is now Willett street on the west. It is bounded northerly by DeLancey and southerly by Broome street. It was then quite out of the city and far into the suburbs. A long range of hills loomed up between that purchase and Broadway, so that a sight of the then seeming busy city was shut out from the view, and a long space of vacant ground intervened and had to be traversed before schools, churches and the marts of trade were reached from that homestead. The land toward East River was shelving, so that the rushing waters made frequent inroads and gradual encroachments upon the lower portions, to obviate which the dirt from the range of hills in front was, in due time, moved to the rear of the lot next to the river, and in that way the waves were stayed and a fine water frontage created. To improve and make that home pleasant and attractive, Col. Willett expended much money and labor, and many years of his life. The grounds were tastefully laid out into a garden, walks, carriageways and arbors, with fruit and shade trees planted upon and around the enclosure. A long row of poplars fringed the garden on one side, while cedar and other evergreens embellished or shaded the walks and other parts of the grounds. These trees were planted some years before the present century, for the eldest son alive of Col. Willett, now eighty-seven, writes me they were full grown at his earliest recollection. Not far from the center of those grounds the owner built a large, commodious and roomy dwelling, and there, for over a quarter of a century, he entertained his numerous visitors and callers, with a welcome and a generous hospitality, that no one knows better, if so well, how to extend, than an army officer who has seen much of the world; there too, he furnished a home and a cordial welcome to dependent relatives, to whom he was all that the most kind and indulgent parent could be. Although not a *millionaire*, yet he was in comfortable circumstances, kept his horses and carriage, lived generously for

those times, all of which could be done in those days of frugality and simplicity, on an income of five or six thousand dollars a year. One day last summer that eldest son crossed over from Jersey City to revisit the scenes of his childhood, that he might give a better description for this paper prepared in memory of his father, of that old homestead and of the grounds where his feet rambled when a boy. But indeed how changed; seven or eight busy streets now cross those grounds, while the site of the garden, the walks, the carriage-ways, the trees, the arbors, is now occupied by solid brick structures like Hoe's Printing Press Works, large Catholic Church, and buildings of that description; yet in his mind's eye he again saw the home as it was early in the present century, the long range of hills, over which he climbed on his way to school, the play ground, the boys of his youth, the fruit trees which yielded profusely, the large favorite cherry tree, capable of holding a small army of boys upon its huge and wide spreading branches, stood out a conspicuous figure as he looked back over the vista of years; many an afternoon in summer at the close of school, a hundred boys could be found ensconced in that generous tree, partaking of its seeming inexhaustible supply, with a zest and a relish that no one can enjoy so well as a schoolboy. He of all others, in that great city, was probably the only survivor who could remember, in all its details, those grounds as they were years ago. During Col. Willett's residence there and for years thereafter that old homestead was widely known as "Cedar Grove" or "The Willett Place."

In 1783, Col. Willett was among the active persons who formed the Society of Cincinnati, having for its object the promotion of brotherly feeling among the officers who served in the war of the revolution. When LaFayette visited this country in 1824, he was the only surviving major general who belonged to that society, so too, Col. Willett was a member of the Tammany society, formed about the same time, more for the purpose, however, of keeping in check the apprehended tendency of the government to monarchy; not until many years later, did it become an organization to promote the success of a political party.

Col. Willett was three times married. The first marriage was to Mary Pease in April, 1760, before he was quite twenty years of age. By that marriage one son was born, who became a noted surgeon in the United States army, and who died unmarried. Unto the second marriage no children were born. The third wife

was Margaretta Bancker, married not far from 1800; by her he had four children. The eldest son, Marinus, was a physician, and married and had children; he is now deceased. William M. was the second son by that marriage; married and now eighty-seven years old, and living in Jersey City, a retired divine of the Methodist Episcopal Church; was a member of the Methodist Episcopal General Conference in 1826; later, an instructor in Hebrew and Biblical literature in Wesleyan University and editor. In 1843 he founded the Biblical Institute in Vermont, of which he was president until 1848. Edward, the other son, is a lawyer by profession, now eighty-six years old, and residing at Brook Green, S. C. The fourth child was Margaretta, who married James H. Ray and died years ago. The widow of Col. Willett died in 1867, at the age of ninety-six.

Col. Willett was tall, erect, commanding figure, finely proportioned, with the air and build of a military man. His face was handsome, his eyes blue, his countenance very pleasing and attractive, and his manners those of a courteous and cultivated gentleman. One of his full length portraits, taken when he was thirty-five years old, in continental uniform, by Trumbull, is now in possession of his youngest son, as are the sword and hanger worn by Col. Willett during the war. A portrait of Col. Willett is shown on page 272 of Lossing's History of the Empire State. Col. Willett was a plain, blunt man, outspoken, perfectly fearless, a hater of all shams and an enthusiastic patriot. His acquaintance and correspondence with the prominent men of his day were extensive. His son has dozens of letters to his father from Governor Clinton, Aaron Burr, LaFayette, Lord Stirling, and men of like character. He and Burr were in early times intimate friends, but after the duel with Hamilton, and Burr's trial for treason, they lived to meet and pass each other on the street without recognition. Col. Willett admired the political writings of Thomas Paine, but after the publication of "Paine's Age of Reason" his works were altogether discarded by Willett. He was a faithful attendant at the Protestant Episcopal Church, (St. Stephen's), then located on Christie street, one block from the Bowery, and about a mile from Col. Willett's residence.

In a foot note in Lossing's Empire State it is stated Col. Willett graduated from King's, now Columbia College. This may admit of some doubt, when it is remembered that Col. Willett entered the army before he was eighteen, and married before he was twenty. Nevertheless he was a person of unusually strong mind,

strengthened by observation and extensive reading. His correspondence and official army reports are clear and marked with accuracy and precision. As a public speaker he was a model. The fact that Col. Gansevoort deputed him to reply to St. Leger's demand for the surrender of Fort Stanwix, indicates that his ability in that line was recognized by the commanding officer. That speech deserves a place in every history and rhetorical school book in the land, alongside of Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty, or give me death."

Among the last public acts of Col. Willett were, in 1824, while acting as chairman of the Greek committee, presidential elector, and welcoming LaFayette. During the last few years of his life he mingled but little in public affairs and with the outside world; surrounded by his family and immediate friends, he yielded slowly, but not reluctantly, to the gradual progress of decay. He had outlived his generation, and passed his fourscore years; his mind was constantly fixed upon the approaching change with trust and entire resignation; with the greatest humility, but at the same time with the liveliest feelings of piety. A few months before his death he was attacked with paralysis, from which he recovered; yet his body and constitution were much enfeebled by the stroke; medicine had to be frequently resorted to; the absence of his regular physician, in one of his attacks, induced him to neglect the usual remedies, and he was so severely attacked that his strength wasted rapidly away.

On Sunday, August 22, 1830, the fifty-third anniversary of the abandonment of the siege of Fort Stanwix, Col. Willett passed peacefully away—twenty-two days past his ninetieth birthday.

It is related, that as the shadows of death were curtaining the earthly vision of Stonewall Jackson, he, in the delirium of his dying, was again in the roar of battle, and amid the clangor of arms, and called out—"Order A. P. Hill to prepare for action. Pass the infantry to the front rapidly. Tell Major Hawkes"—then he stopped, leaving the sentence unfinished. Presently a smile of ineffable sweetness spread itself over his wan face, "as if his soul had seen a vision," and then he said calmly and quietly, "let us cross over the river, and rest under the shade of the trees;" then without pain or a struggle, his spirit passed peacefully away. Col. Willett had been amid scenes of carnage and bloodshed; he had lived in turbulent times, and been exposed to innumerable perils; he had braved dangers, faced death, escaped the hissing bullet, the poisoned arrow, the glittering tomahawk, and the murderous

scalping knife, and survived to the grand old age of 90, to receive the homage and plaudits of a grateful people, and to die at last surrounded by his family and friends. He too, crossed over the river, and rested under the shade of the trees. His death cast a deep gloom over the whole city, and called forth deep and heartfelt expressions of sorrow. The Common Council of New York, the Court of Errors, then in session in that city, the society of Cincinnati, and other public bodies passed suitable resolutions, and resolved to attend his funeral in a body. The military of the city directed that appropriate honors should be paid at the interment, and that minute guns should be fired, corresponding with his age.

The public journals of the day, not in New York alone, but throughout the country, paid handsome and well-deserved tributes to his memory. The remains were enclosed in a cedar coffin, which the deceased had prepared ten years before; at his own request the body was habited in his ordinary dress and with his hat on, as he was accustomed to be seen in the street. The confined remains were placed in an arbor upon the grounds of the old homestead on the day of the funeral, that all who chose might take a farewell look. It was estimated that over ten thousand persons availed themselves of the opportunity. The funeral took place in the afternoon of Tuesday, August 24, at which officiated Rev. Dr. DeWitt, a son of an old officer of the revolution under Col. Willett. The procession started at 4 P. M. for the place of burial, and it extended from Broome street to Trinity Church yard, where the remains were to be interred. It was after dark before the grave was reached and by the light of torches all that was earthly of Col. Marinus Willett was lowered to his last resting place amid the firing of guns, the strains of martial music and the sorrows of millions of his admiring countrymen.

Other heroes of the revolution may stand out more prominently on the pages of recorded history; other names may be perpetuated in poetry and song, in flowing numbers and in brighter colors; other men may be kept alive in the world's remembrance by lettered inscriptions of their heroic deeds emblazoned upon chiseled marble or sculptured monuments, but none who lived in the trying and troublous times of Col. Willett more faithfully or efficiently than he, and certainly none within the county of Tryon, performed the important work assigned to him, which in the result worked out the grand problem of his country's destiny. He was a fearless leader, an enthusiastic patriot, a worthy citizen and an uncompromising friend of the rights of man.

5102

